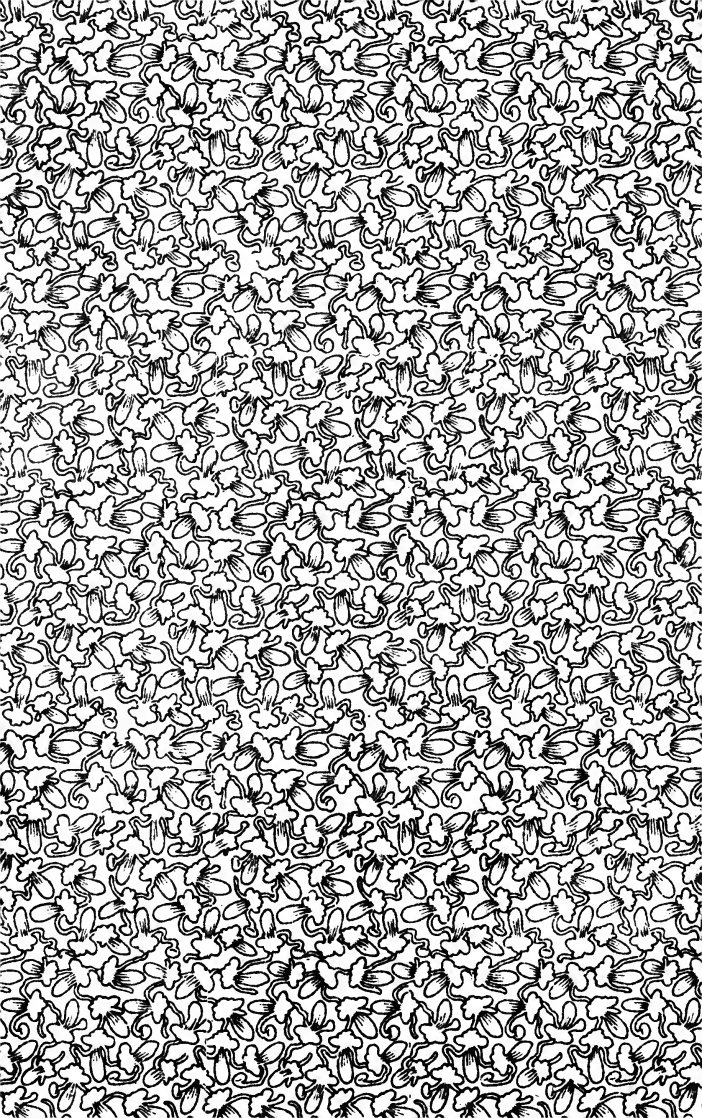


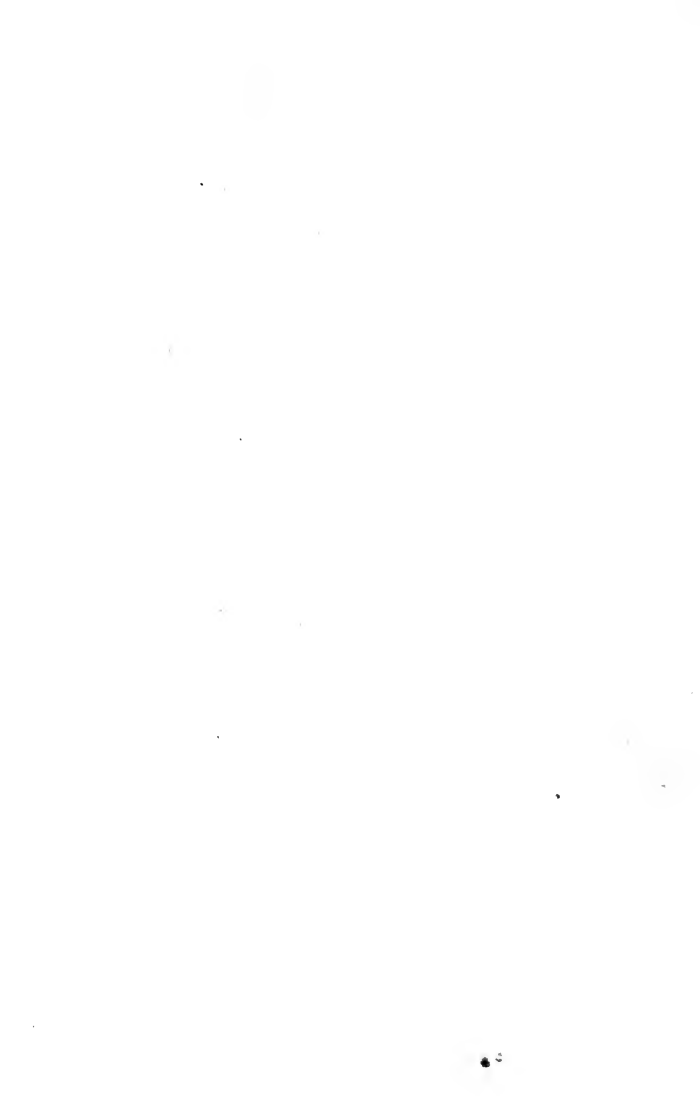
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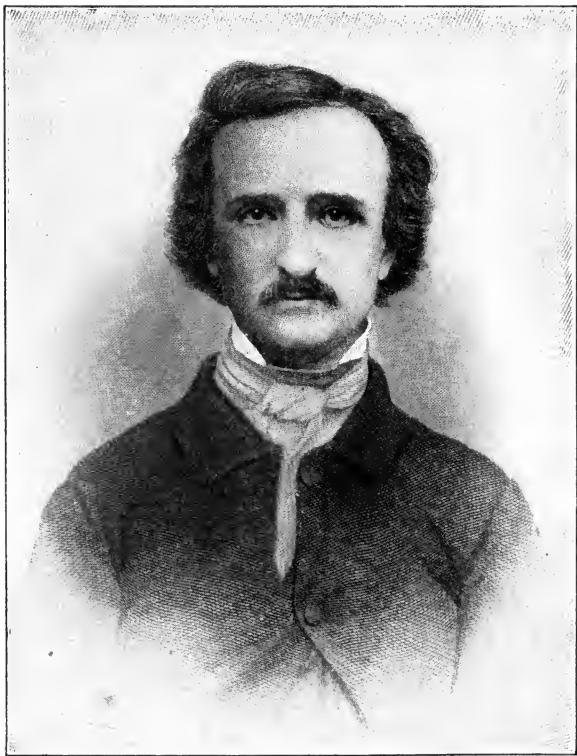
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Edgar Allan Poe

# A BOOK OF SHORT STORIES.

*Corson*

SELECTED AND EDITED

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# INTRODUCTION

## I

### ESTABLISHING STANDARDS FOR THE SHORT STORY IN PROSE

AMERICANS who are sensitive to the assertion that America has originated nothing in literature point to Edgar Allan Poe as the originator of the short story. In the ordinary sense of the word, of course he was nothing of the sort. The origin of the short story is lost in the unhistorical morning of human society. Not to speak of the ancient tales of Rome, Greece, Arabia, India, we know that there were numberless fine short stories in English and other modern tongues hundreds of years before Poe was born. The mystery of narrative effectiveness was not unknown to the nameless authors of the English and Scottish popular ballads. Before the end of the fourteenth century Chaucer had made a book of short stories, the *Canterbury Tales*, quite as vivid, various, and artful as this of ours. Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, a prose collection of the Elizabethan Age, contained sufficient of "human interest" and dramatic situation to furnish plots for Shakespeare and a generation of great dramatists. And so we might proceed to show that short stories in prose or verse of more or less merit have appeared in every age.<sup>1</sup> Is it a question of the origination of the "modern" short story? Poe himself declared in 1842 that "we are far behind our progenitors

<sup>1</sup> See *The Short Story in English*, by Henry Seidel Canby. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1909.

in this department of literature," and pointed to the earlier numbers of *Blackwood's* and to the British magazines in general for superior examples conforming to his own standards.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of Poe is not that he originated a literary form but that he defined it sharply and illustrated it brilliantly at a critical moment in its history. He appeared at a time when the reading public, entering upon a period of immense expansion, was calling for the multiplication of magazines, and editors were calling for the multiplication of reading matter. Poe—himself an editor—perceived and pointed out the significance for the author of the new periodical publications: "The increase, within a few years, of the magazine literature, is by no means to be regarded as indicating what some critics would suppose it to indicate—a downward tendency in American taste or in American letters. It is but a sign of the times, an indication of an era in which men are forced upon the curt, the condensed, the well-digested in place of the voluminous—in a word, upon journalism in lieu of dissertation. . . . I will not be sure that men at present think more profoundly than half a century ago, but beyond question they think with more rapidity, with more skill, with more tact, with more of method and less of excrescence in the thought."<sup>2</sup> As a writer of tales Poe held himself to "more of method and less of excrescence in the thought" than characterized the work of most of his contemporaries and predecessors. His exemplifications of terseness and system in composition have served as models from his day to this. His discussions of the purpose and principles of the short story writer, particularly in his review<sup>3</sup> of Hawthorne's

<sup>1</sup> *Selections from the Critical Writings of Poe*, by F. C. Prescott. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1909, pp. 96, 97.

<sup>2</sup> *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by James A. Harrison. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co. Vol. XVI, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> See Prescott's *Selections*.



*Twice-Told Tales* and in the "Philosophy of Composition,"<sup>1</sup> have served as the starting point for all subsequent treatises on technique. It may be fairly maintained that he established standards for the short story in prose, to which all subsequent writers have generally striven to conform. Let us enumerate the chief articles of Poe's doctrine—some of which, by the way, may be found in Aristotle's *Poetics*.

(1) A good short story must produce upon the reader a perfectly unified effect or impression. "A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step."<sup>2</sup> "Keeping originality always in view—for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest—I say to myself, in the first place, 'Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?'"<sup>3</sup> As it happens, Poe illustrates the "Philosophy of Composition" by an account of the order of his mental processes in composing his poem "The Raven," of which the intended effect was sadness awakened by the death of a beautiful woman. But it is clear that Poe's prose tales, as well as his poems, were written *after* an exact determination of the total impression to be produced by them.

<sup>1</sup> See Prescott's *Selections*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

(2) No stroke should be made in a short story, which does not advance the action towards its *dénouement* or contribute to the premeditated effect. "In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one preëstablished design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel." <sup>1</sup>

(3) There is but one absolutely right order of arrangement for the details of a story. This perfect order few authors actually achieve; but all good artists strive for it. "Plot," he says, "is very imperfectly understood, and has never been rightly defined. Many persons regard it as mere complexity of incident. In its most rigorous acceptance, it is *that from which no component atom can be removed, and in which none of the component atoms can be displaced, without ruin to the whole*;" <sup>2</sup> and although a sufficiently good plot may be constructed, without attention to the whole rigor of this definition, still it is the definition which the true artist should always keep in view, and always endeavor to consummate in his works." <sup>3</sup>

(4) The short story, like all forms of fiction, must show "originality," that is to say, the power of so refashioning

<sup>1</sup> Prescott's *Selections*, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "The Fable, being an imitation of an action, should be an imitation of an action that is one and entire, the parts of it being so connected, that if any one of them be either transposed or taken away, the whole will be destroyed or changed; for whatever may be either retained or omitted, without making any sensible difference, is not properly a part." *The Poetics of Aristotle*, New York: Cassell and Co., 1901, p. 31. It may be observed that this single sentence implies everything in our articles (1), (2), and (3).

<sup>3</sup> Prescott's *Selections*, p. 320; see also pp. 310-311.

the stuff of experience as to produce novel effects. Poe praises Hawthorne warmly on the ground that he possesses originality in high degree. "Mr. Hawthorne's distinctive trait is invention, creation, imagination, originality—a trait which, in the literature of fiction, is positively worth all the rest. . . . The inventive or original mind as frequently displays itself in novelty of *tone* as in novelty of matter. Mr. Hawthorne is original at *all* points." <sup>1</sup> Originality reveals itself in the choice of subject, in the disposition of details, in the total "atmosphere" of the piece: it is the peculiar personality of the author impressing a special character upon all his work. A short story deserves the name of art only when it is a "reproduction of what the Senses perceived in Nature through the veil of the soul." <sup>2</sup>

(5) A short story should be short enough to be perused at a single sitting of from a half hour to one or two hours.<sup>3</sup> This prescription is not made in order to set up an arbitrary distinction between a short story and a novel. It is offered rather as a condition essential to securing that unity of impression which is the true distinguishing object of the short story writer. The novelist expects to make a series of various impressions, and can afford to allow his reader breathing spaces between them. But in the case of "the tale proper," as Poe put it, "simple cessation in reading, would, of itself, be sufficient to destroy the true unity." During the hour of perusal, the soul of the reader must remain without interruption or weariness under the writer's control.<sup>4</sup>

Bringing these points into line, we may say that, ac-

<sup>1</sup> Prescott's *Selections*, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. "In the fable a certain length is requisite, but, that length must be such as to present a whole easily comprehended by the memory." *The Poetics of Aristotle*, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Prescott's *Selections*, p. 94.

According to Poe's practice and precept, a short story is: A brief, original narrative, free from excrescence, of events cunningly arranged for the production of a single predetermined effect. If this definition fits all the stories in this book, it will serve our purposes better than most of the definitions devised by recent critics. Professor Brander Matthews, for example, says: "The Short-story fulfils the three false unities of the French classic drama: it shows one action, in one place, on one day. A Short-story deals with a single character, a single event, a single emotion, or the series of emotions called forth by a single situation."<sup>1</sup> This is, at most, a description of a tendency rather than of an established fact. If you will examine the stories in our collection with reference to Professor Matthews's definition, you will be inclined to believe that the authors have generally acted upon Poe's assurance that the only unity with which the artist needs to concern himself is the unity of effect.

## II

### TYPES OF THE SHORT STORY

We have discussed hitherto those characteristics which all good short stories have in common; we have discussed, so to speak, the genus *short story*. How shall we distinguish the various species of the genus? The possible principles of classification are almost unlimited, and it is perhaps worth the student's while to experiment with several of them. We may group our stories with reference to the

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of the Short Story*, p. 16. Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901. Of course the maker of the definition is at liberty to say that, "Rip Van Winkle," "The Minister's Black Veil," "The Gold-Bug," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Courting of T'now-head's Bell," and "Phoebe" are not "Short-stories."

emotion which they excite in us as tragic, comic, pathetic, A  
farcical, etc. We may group them with reference to the  
principal passion involved in them as love stories, murder B  
stories, revenge stories, etc. We may group them with  
reference to the significant characters who appear in them C  
as fairy stories, ghost stories, animal stories, etc. We may  
group them with reference to certain rather vaguely defined D  
literary categories as romantic, realistic, idealistic, E  
naturalistic, etc. We may group them with reference to  
the occupations and social strata presented as stories of F  
peasant life, slum life, military life, clerical life, etc. We  
may group them with reference to geographical setting as  
stories of New England, California, Tennessee, Scotland,  
India, etc. And whatever series of groups we chose, we  
should easily find a long list of specimens to represent each  
of our divisions.<sup>1</sup>

R. L. Stevenson, who like Poe was both an author and  
an analyst of stories, suggested still another method of  
classification which is perhaps more fundamental and more  
interesting than any of these. He grouped his own tales  
not with reference to the effect that they produce upon the  
reader but with reference to the nature of the impulse in  
which they originated in his own mind. "There are," he  
said, "so far as I know, three ways, and three ways, only,  
of writing a story. You may take a plot and fit characters  
to it, or you may take a character and choose incidents and  
situations to develop it, or lastly . . . you may take a X  
certain atmosphere and get actions and persons to realize  
and express it."<sup>2</sup> The division here suggested is interest-

<sup>1</sup> Elaborate classifications may be found in Barrett's *Short Story Writing*, Ch. II, and in Esenwein's *Writing the Short Story*, Pt. I, Ch. II; but elaborate classifications generally result in a confusion with regard to the principle of division.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson*, by Graham Balfour. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908. Vol. II, pp. 168-169.

ing, because it provokes the student to discover what in the case of any particular story was the starting point in the composition. It is fundamental, because it is based upon the three elements present in every story—a scene, an actor, and an act.

It must be admitted that in some of the finest stories it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to determine which of the three elements receives the predominant emphasis. A composer like Irving unites plot, characters, and atmosphere into a skilful and intricate harmony, and, to continue the musical analogy, it is hard to say which part carries the “air.” What is it in “Rip Van Winkle” that Irving strove chiefly to “realize and express”—the notion of a man falling asleep to wake years afterwards, or the character of the loveable village ne’er-do-well, or the dreamy and legend-haunted valley of the Hudson? In the case of Hardy’s “Three Strangers” we may feel reasonably sure that no one of the *characters* contained the original germ of the story; but we cannot separate the interest of the other two elements—the plot-interest developed by the juxtaposition at a convivial gathering of a condemned man and his executioner, from the interest of the intensely realized Wessex “atmosphere” which envelops the whole situation. So, too, in Barrie’s “Courting of T’nowhead’s Bell” there is the strictest interdependence of plot, characters, and setting, and one is at a loss to declare whether the author set out with a desire to “express” Thrums, or to illustrate the characters of two Scotch lovers, or to realize the humorous possibilities of a series of odd situations. Distinct species or types of the short story, according to the division suggested by Stevenson, are recognizable only when two of the component elements are manifestly subordinate to the third.

“*You may take a plot and fit characters to it.*” If the ef-

fect is to be secured by a plot to which characters and setting are clearly subordinate, it must be a very thrilling or a very ingenious plot. Poe, who prided himself upon the variety as well as upon the excellence of his tales, worked out at least two distinct varieties of what we may call the plot-story:—a thrilling variety and an ingenious variety.

In the former sort, of which "The Pit and the Pendulum" will serve as an example, the interest is sustained by an intrinsically exciting situation—in this instance, by a man bound fast beneath a slowly-descending crescent-shaped knife. In such a situation any man whatsoever becomes instantly the object of nervous solicitude; we can dispense in his case with "atmosphere" and traits of character. Most short stories of highly extraordinary adventure may be related more or less closely to this variety. In Stockton's "The Lady or the Tiger?", for example, the barest suggestion of humanity and the briefest indication of barbaric setting suffice to render the situation plausible and captivating to the imagination; and in the same author's sea yarns, like "The Wreck of the Thomas Hyke," and in his fairy tales of science, like "Negative Gravity," it is perfectly obvious that the characters and the locality were painted upon the plot, and might, as it were, be erased and replaced by a half-dozen different decorations without impairing the essential element in the conception of the story. Stevenson's "The Sire de Malé-troit's Door" is a very superior specimen of the thrilling variety of the plot-story—superior because a fine artist has done his utmost to give firm historical coloring to his scene and vitality to a set of somewhat conventional romantic figures; yet one can hardly doubt that this scene and these figures were elaborated after the author had established as his center of interest a situation in which

some man or other is forced to choose between marriage or death—the lady or the tiger!

The ingenious variety of plot-story which Poe called the "tale of ratiocination" is represented in our collection by *X* "The Gold-Bug" alone. Other examples by Poe are "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," and "The Purloined Letter." Now it has been sometimes asserted that "The Gold-Bug" is really two stories—a story of the quest for buried treasure and a story of the deciphering of a cryptogram, stitched together in the middle; but this conception is erroneous. The quest and discovery of the treasure is the dramatic demonstration that the cryptogram has been correctly deciphered. "The Gold-Bug" is plotted on precisely the same system as "The Purloined Letter": a problem is presented, the solution is given, and then the steps which led to the solution are explained. In other words, "The Gold-Bug" has the essential features of a "detective story." The scene is carefully adjusted to the problem, and the principal character is designed expressly to solve it. The detective story, which in recent years has attained great popularity at the hands of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his rivals, preserves its special type characteristics with remarkable distinctness. Indeed, it has seemed possible to Miss Carolyn Wells to write an entire volume on "The Technique of the Mystery Story"—a volume devoted almost exclusively to the consideration of problems for the literary detective.

*"You may take a character and choose incidents and situations to develop it."* It is clear that Stevenson's "Will o' the Mill" was composed in this fashion. The effect aimed at is the charm of a tranquilly contemplative and reflective soul. This effect is produced chiefly by showing how this soul deals with three main "incidents" of life—the



choice of a career, love, and death. The effect is further emphasized by the selection of a scene and enveloping atmosphere of natural beauty and unruffled peace. There is just enough development in the soul of Will to link the three incidents of his earthly pilgrimage into one continuous gently rising and falling action; otherwise, "Will o' the Mill" would be classed rather as a character sketch than as a story. Mr. Kipling's "William the Conqueror," in *The Day's Work*, similarly illustrates the characters of men and women who "do things." Though in this case the time is limited to the duration of a famine in a certain district in India, the incidents are somewhat loosely related—it would certainly be possible to remove or transpose some of them without noticeable injury to the design.

To produce a character-story firmly unified and at the same time vigorously dramatic a different procedure must be adopted: a critical situation must be discovered in which the conduct of the principal character or characters in a single act or closely articulated series of acts betrays the temper and habits of a lifetime. Obviously, characters with sharp edges, marked idiosyncrasies, or dominating passions most readily and completely reveal themselves in the isolated acts and emergencies of their lives. A delightfully humorous illustration may be seen in Frank Stockton's "Asaph": a man who for unnumbered years has loafed and smoked his pipe at the expense of a sister, being deprived of his creature comforts, suddenly exhibits an active ingenuity and a dramatic passion of indolence issuing in a victorious assurance that he will be able for the rest of his days to smoke his pipe and loaf at the expense of a wife. Similarly focused in a single critical situation is the character-revelation in Mrs. Mary Wilkins Freeman's "A New England Nun," and in several other delicate delineations of New England types. Mr. Kip-

ling's "The Courting of Dinah Shadd," likewise centered upon a single definite situation, achieves the exposure of Sergeant Mulvaney's passions and ideas by presenting him in dramatic relations with no less than three other clearly realized characters, and by allowing him to relate the event in his own rich slang and dialect. Thomas Hardy's "An Imaginative Woman," in *Wessex Tales*,—a study of a morbidly sentimental character—attains a singular intensity of effect through a climactic series of related situations in which one identical passion, a fantastic but overmastering yearning, variously expresses itself.

Relatively speaking, first rate stories in which plot and scene are plainly subordinate to character are not very abundant. Poe, for example, created a number of rather striking maniacs, but one questions whether any of his tales originated in a conception of character: his "William Wilson" is a good subject for debate.

"*You may take a certain atmosphere and get actions and persons to realize and express it.*" Stevenson pointed to one of his own stories as an illustration of this type. "I'll give you an example," he said, "—'The Merry Men.' There I began with a feeling of one of those islands on the west coast of Scotland, and I gradually developed the story to express the sentiment with which that coast affected me." What is the nature of this feeling for "atmosphere," and what are the elements which constitute "atmosphere"? Stevenson partly answered this question in a passage of *Vailima Letters* written in his South Sea island home in the year preceding that of his death: "It pours with rain from the westward, very unusual kind of weather; I was standing out on the little verandah in front of my room this morning, and there went through me or over me a wave of extraordinary and apparently baseless emotion. I literally staggered. And then the explanation came, and I knew

I had found a frame of mind and body that belonged to Scotland, and particularly to the neighborhood of Colander. Very odd these identities of sensation, and the world of connotations implied; highland huts, and peat smoke, and the brown, swirling rivers, and wet clothes, and whisky, and the romance of the past, and that indescribable bite of the whole thing at a man's heart, which is—or rather lies at the bottom of—a story.”<sup>1</sup> To express in a tale this atmosphere constituted of highland huts, peat smoke, swirling rivers, wet clothes, whisky, and the romance of the past, one must take persons whose lives have been shaped and stamped and dyed by these elements, and one must take actions which are inseparably related to the persons as consequences of the characteristics imposed upon them by the scene and the total environment. There results what has often been called the “local-color” story. )

Bearing in mind that local color may appear in every element of a story—in action, character, language, as well as in the mere physical setting—we may say that since the middle of the last century the majority of notable short story writers, especially in America, have been local-colorists. It does not follow that every one of these writers has consciously begun the composition of each of his stories with a vague feeling of an atmosphere which he desired to express. The point is rather that, in an age generally demanding realism in fiction and profoundly impressed by the relation of people to their environment, they have made choice, once for all, of some more or less definite locality, have intensely studied it, and have reproduced its peculiarities of “color” in the very stuff of their art. This is a rather different procedure from that described by Mrs. Wharton in the opening paragraphs of “The Confessional”

<sup>1</sup> *Vailima Letters—Letters and Miscellanies of Robert Louis Stevenson*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909, p. 238.

(in *Crucial Instances*), where the narrator tells how a "craving for local color" made him a deliberate collector of foreign "pigment" at a restaurant frequented by the Italian mill-hands at Dunstable. To indicate a locality by a few superficial splashes is an easily acquired trick; to express a locality through the entire stuff and texture of a story is possible only when a feeling for locality lies, as Stevenson says, "at the bottom" of it. Barring such writers as Henry James, who is cosmopolitan and concerned rather with social than with geographical areas, and barring the writers of the detective story, to whom the plot is always the primary consideration, it may be said that local color, in our broad sense of the word, is the most conspicuous distinguishing mark of the authors of the short story since Poe. Technique, plot-formulas, elementary types of character they possess in common, but the distinguishing colors of pioneer California were perceived and appropriated by Bret Harte;<sup>1</sup> what makes Wessex different from Lincolnshire was Thomas Hardy's discovery; the wide realm of India Kipling holds as his demesne; decadent New England is shared by Mrs. Freeman, Sarah Orne Jewett, Margaret Deland, and Alice Brown; Thrums belongs to Barrie; old New Orleans to Cable; old Virginia

<sup>1</sup> In an article on "The Rise of the 'Short Story'" published in the *Cornhill Magazine* of July, 1899, Bret Harte modestly declines the credit for originating the short story in America, but he seems on the whole to accept the credit for opening the vein of "local color." A good story was written in Poe's time, he says, "but it was not the American short story of to-day. It was not characteristic of American life, American habits, nor American thought. It was not vital and instinct with the experience and observation of the average American; it made no attempt to follow his reasoning or to understand his peculiar form of expression—which it was apt to consider vulgar; it had no sympathy with those dramatic contrasts and surprises which are the wonders of American civilization; it took no account of environment and of geographical limitations; indeed, it knew little of American geography."

to Page; the Georgia plantations to Joel Chandler Harris; the Tennessee mountains to Charles Egbert Craddock; the Middle West to Hamlin Garland, Octave Thanet, and Stewart Edward White; Alaska to Jack London; Texas and the "Tenderloin" to O. Henry; and so on.<sup>1</sup>

From this great mass of realistic short stories so firmly rooted in definite soils and in the observed life of our contemporaries, we must set off an older variety in which setting and atmosphere are faintly historical or wholly the fabrication of the romantic imagination—a variety which pleases precisely because of its remoteness from ordinary experience. Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, though not a short story, strikingly illustrates the genesis of this kind of tale. It originated in a dream of which in the morning, as the author said, "all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head like mine, filled with Gothic story), and that on the uppermost banister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armor. In the evening I sat down to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say, or relate."<sup>2</sup> The *Castle of Otranto* is, then, a perfect example of a story developed by getting "actions and persons to realize and express" an imaginary and unlocalized scene. Evidently the experience of Coleridge was similar when, in consequence of a dream, he sat down to write his famous "Kubla Khan": what remained in his memory, what he transferred to paper, was the "stately pleasure-dome," "Alph, the sacred river," "the caverns measureless to man," "the sunny spots of greenery," "the deep romantic chasm," "the mighty fountain," the shadow floating "mid-

<sup>1</sup> See *The American Short Story*, by Elias Lieberman. Ridgewood, New Jersey: The Editor, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> See Introduction to *The Castle of Otranto* by Henry Morley. London: Cassell & Co., 1901, pp. 5-6.

way on the waves"—a setting, in short, suggestive and wildly imaginary, of which the meaning was never expressed in act or character. With "Kubla Khan" may instructively be compared Tennyson's "Mariana," another poem containing two elements of a romantic tale: an oppressively melancholy *setting* made predominant by its development through eight lines of each of the seven stanzas, and a melancholy *character* expressing the setting in a four-line refrain. Poe's imagination had fed upon such tales and poems as these.<sup>1</sup> It is a fairly safe guess that his "Fall of the House of Usher" originated like them in the setting—in the conception of the house itself, an ancient ruin crumbling into a tarn. It is certain at any rate that the shadowy human figures and their obscure acts and relations are employed but as means to express the dominating personality of the house, of which the fall gives the final emphasis to an impression of mysterious and overwhelming gloom.

Some analysts of technique—Professor Pitkin, for example, in his *The Art and Business of Story Writing*—range alongside of the fundamental types which we have just been distinguishing another type—the story with a theme, purpose, or moral. It is unquestionably true that a theme may arise in the author's mind, and clamor to be put into a story, before either character or plot or setting has presented itself in his consciousness. Hawthorne records such suggestions in his *American Note-Books*:<sup>2</sup>

"A story to show how we are all wronged and wrongers, and avenge one another." (p. 107.)

"There is evil in every human heart, which may remain

<sup>1</sup> See the illuminating sections on "The Gothic Romance" and "The Renovation of Gothic Romance" in *The Development of the English Novel*, by Wilbur L. Cross. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1900.

<sup>2</sup> The citations are from Vol. IX of the Standard Library Edition of Hawthorne's works published by Houghton, Mifflin and Co.

latent, perhaps, through the whole of life; but circumstances may arouse it to activity. To imagine such circumstances." (p. 43.)

But much more frequently even with Hawthorne, who is the preëminent moralist among the short story writers, a symbol<sup>1</sup> or a situation or a character or a setting presented itself first, and the meaning or moral was evolved later. The following examples will illustrate each of these four sorts of originating impulse:

*A symbol:* "A snake taken into a man's stomach and nourished there from fifteen years to thirty-four, tormenting him most horribly. A type of envy or some other evil passion." (p. 34.)

*A situation:* "Suppose a married couple fondly attached to one another, and to think that they lived solely for one another; then it to be found out that they were divorced, or that they might separate if they chose. What would be its effect?" (p. 89.)

*A character:* "A woman to sympathize with all emotions, but to have none of her own." (p. 109.)

*A setting:* (1) "The scene of a story or sketch to be laid within the light of a street-lantern; the time, when the lamp is near going out; and the catastrophe to be simultaneous with the last flickering beam." (p. 22.)

(2) "A house to be built over a natural spring of inflammable gas, and to be constantly illuminated therewith. What moral could be drawn from this?" (p. 106.)

Now, as we are viewing the classification of short stories, a tale by Hawthorne which originates in the theme, let us say, that "there is evil in every human breast" is not a different species from that which originates in a conception of a suitable place or person or predicament for a tale. Of

<sup>1</sup> A symbol, strictly considered, is always a part of the character, the plot, or the setting.

a tale so originating we should rather declare that the theme had presented itself before the processes of artistic composition were started; so long as it remained in the theme-state it was indistinguishable from the germ of a sermon. And, however important the moral meaning may become in the final "effect," the moment that Hawthorne actually begins to compose, he must in accordance with the very constitution of a story, seize, as Stevenson said, upon one of the three constituent elements and fit to it the other two. He must, in other words, employ the same means to present his theme that a writer would employ who had no theme to present; his story can therefore be classified with reference to the relative emphasis upon character, plot, and setting.

Let us put the matter in still another way: the introduction of a theme or moral may be regarded as a technical device for intensifying an effect primarily produced by the mere transactions of the story. It is an appeal to the reader to relate the story directly to his own experience as an illustration of a "general idea"—a truth of universal interest. An effect, for instance, is produced by the mere appearance of a minister in a black veil; but that effect is greatly intensified by the introduction of the theme: *Every man wears a black veil*. An effect is produced by the mere relation of the predicament of the goat who jumped into a well and could not get out; but the effect is intensified by the "moral" placed at the conclusion of the ancient fable: *Look before you leap*. Mr. Kipling in his Indian tales frequently employed an ingenious modification of this device. By introducing the theme or moral at the beginning of his story he made it render an additional service; in this position, it arouses the feeling of suspense. Here are some examples:

"As a general rule, it is inexpedient to meddle with ques-



tions of State in a land where men are highly paid to work them out for you. This tale is a justifiable exception." ("A Germ-Destroyer" in *Plain Tales from the Hills*.)

"Some people hold that an English Cavalry regiment cannot run. This is a mistake." ("The Rout of the White Hussars" in the same.)

"East of Suez, some hold, the direct control of Providence ceases. . . . This theory accounts for some of the more unnecessary horrors of life in India: it may be stretched to explain my story." ("The Mark of the Beast" in *Mine Own People*.)

Consider now our specimen of the short story by Kipling, "The Man Who Was." The author has taken a plot in some respects curiously similar to that of "Rip Van Winkle," of which the essence is this: a man who has been absent for a long period of years returns to the scene of his earlier life and in a series of interesting incidents identifies himself and his surroundings. To this plot Kipling has fitted an elaborate and impressive setting, and has filled in the stage with the necessary characters. By these means is produced an ample effect of terrible pathos. But, not content with this, Kipling screws up the effect one degree higher by the introduction of a theme announced ironically in a curt sentence at the outset of the story: "Let it be clearly understood that the Russian is a delightful person till he tucks his shirt in."

Kipling apparently passed this device on to O. Henry, who employs it in much the same way. O. Henry's "Helping the Other Fellow" (in *Rolling Stones*) begins with a theme in the form of a question of Mulvaney's, "But can him that helps others help themselves?" In the second paragraph the author makes a bow to his celebrated predecessor: "As usual, I became aware that the Man from Bombay had already written the story." As a variant

upon the plain moral, O. Henry sometimes begins with a somewhat enigmatic proverb which piques curiosity, as in "The Gold that Glittered" (*Strictly Business*): "A story with a moral appended is like the bill of a mosquito. It bores you, and then injects a stinging drop to irritate your conscience. Therefore let us have the moral first and be done with it. All is not gold that glitters, but it is a wise child that keeps the stopper in his bottle of testing acid." Perhaps in most of O. Henry's stories of this character it is fairly obvious that the theme or moral was formulated after the story was conceived. In "Phoebe," however, the theme announced in the preliminary conversation and resumed in the epilogue is the thread on which the incidents of the plot are strung: Luck plays a critical part in the affairs of men and nations. The theme of this story may be regarded nevertheless as a means of intensifying an effect which is produced primarily through the plot.

### III

## CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The student who reads recent essays and books on the subject will find here and there a good many extravagant utterances regarding the short story as a form and regarding the value of the literature written in that form. This fact is in curious contrast with Professor Canby's statement that "a perfect short story, because it *is* a short story, will be strangely undervalued in comparison with artistically second-rate essay, drama, or verse."<sup>1</sup> The danger that the tale might be undervalued in comparison with the poem was felt long ago by Poe when he said: "Were we called upon, however, to designate that class of

<sup>1</sup> *A Study of The Short Story*, p. 77. By H. S. Canby: Holt, 1913.

composition which, next to such a poem as we have suggested, should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous field of exercise—we should unhesitatingly speak of the prose tale, as Mr. Hawthorne has here [in *Twice-Told Tales*] exemplified it.”<sup>1</sup> But the danger at present seems to lie rather in the direction of enthusiastic overvaluation of the short story in comparison with the novel—such as appears, for instance, in the introduction to a recent collection<sup>2</sup> of modern short stories: “Gradually men have come to see that a perfect short story demands an art even more delicate and rare than a novel. . . . It must not be assumed, however, that because the short story occupies but a small canvas it is therefore inferior to the novel, for this would constitute bulk as the standard of value. . . . The fact is that it is much more difficult to write a perfect short story than a successful novel. It demands superior gifts of concentration, of ingenuity, of fantasy, of originality, of dramatic intensity, of exquisite craftsmanship. . . . America has not yet produced a novelist of the calibre of Dickens or Thackeray, of Meredith or Hardy; but it has produced a host of short-story writers of incomparable excellence.” That is to say, we have no writer who can do the easy thing which Thackeray accomplished, but we have a host of writers who can do the “much more difficult” thing which Poe accomplished.

This, of course, is pure absurdity. The conclusion of common sense is that writing a satisfactory short story is, as compared with writing a satisfactory novel, a small and simple task—not to be undertaken without some talent, yet not beyond the power of men and women of second

<sup>1</sup> Prescott's *Selections*, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> The Great English Short Story Writers, Vol. II, pp. 7, 14, 23. By W. J. and C. W. Dawson: Harpers, 1910.

and third rate talent. Professor Pitkin, who is nothing if not practical, counsels the beginner in fiction to make his first experiments in the shorter form; for, as he says, "a person who can write at all can finish a score of stories in the time required for one novel."<sup>1</sup> If the advice is sound, it is not merely because the writer of the short story can learn his technique and test his powers and sell his product more expeditiously than the novelist. The more important consideration is that an admirable short story may be written by a very young man with brief exercise of ingenuity, superficial observation, and comparatively restricted experience; but a really admirable novel demands a faculty for sustained invention, an understanding of the motives of action, and a depth of experience, which are commoner after than before the age of thirty. It is not an insignificant coincidence that Hawthorne, Bret Harte, Stevenson, Stockton, Barrie, and Kipling had all written excellent tales before they achieved any success with the novel. Nor is it irrelevant to note that *Pamela* was published when Richardson was fifty-one, *Tom Jones* when Fielding was forty-two, *Waverley* when Scott was forty-three, *Vanity Fair* when Thackeray was thirty-six, *The Scarlet Letter* when Hawthorne was forty-six, *Adam Bede* when George Eliot was forty, and—shall we add it?—*Joseph Vance* when De Morgan was sixty-seven. That Kipling produced *Plain Tales from the Hills* when he was twenty-two is not impossible, because it is a fact; but that Thackeray should have published *Vanity Fair* when he was twenty-two is inconceivable, because literary history has no record of such a feat, and because common sense cries aloud that no boy of that age ever possessed the sheer stuff of experience which is woven into that complex web of characters and events.

<sup>1</sup> *The Art and the Business of Story Writing*, p. 16.

Let us then clearly recognize that the literature written in the form of the short story is in some important respects inferior to that written in the form of the novel. Within the prescribed limits of the briefer form, one—and that perhaps the highest—achievement of the writer of prose fiction is virtually impossible: that is, to present a rich and complex character in the processes of development. In order to exhibit Richard Feverel or David Copperfield or Pendennis *growing*, the author must have room to display various scenes, various groups of characters, various critical situations—the ununified events of years through which the hero, struggling, attains the full stature of his many-sided manhood. The short story writer, by virtue of the relatively simple unity of effect which he seeks, must ordinarily confine himself to showing the reaction of a formed and single-minded character to a single set of circumstances; and with such a character, so presented, we can never get on really intimate terms—we can never love him as we love Richard Feverel, we can never hate him as we hate Uriah Heep. When plot is clearly the chief interest, the superiority of the novel is not quite so obvious. No one feels that the short story inadequately exhibits the problems and solutions of Dupin or Sherlock Holmes. No one can wish that “The Pit and the Pendulum” were longer. When the novel is of an epic or episodic structure, a skill in plotting may suffice which is quite inferior to that manifested in the masterly design of “The Gold-Bug.” But take a novel of the dramatic type, say Thomas Hardy’s *Return of the Native*, and compare it with his own dramatic short story, “The Three Strangers”: in the one, the mere plotting is a piece of ingenuity; in the other it is a work of genius. The same illustrations will serve to suggest the comparatively restricted capacity of the short story for conveying the “atmosphere” of a locality and the

aspect of the scene: "The Three Strangers" presents, vividly enough, the interior of one room in one lonely grange on one rainy night; *The Return of the Native* presents the diurnal life at three or four such focal points resolved into the larger unity of Egdon Heath, which we have watched withering through the sultry summer, under storm and star and solemn sunset. All things considered, a fine dramatic short story bears about the same relation of value to a fine dramatic novel that the spirited first scene of *Romeo and Juliet* bears to the five act symphony of *King Lear*.<sup>1</sup>

To compare the value of one short story with that of another short story is an altogether different matter. Poe, in commenting—without excessive modesty—upon his own tales, suggests two points of comparison which our study has prepared us to use. "You would be surprised," he says, "to hear me say that (omitting one or two of my first efforts) I do not consider any one of my stories *better* than another. There is a great variety of kinds and, in degree of value, these kinds vary—but each tale is equally good of *its kind*. The loftiest kind is that of the highest imagination—and for this reason only, "Ligeia" may be called my *best tale*."<sup>2</sup> When Poe says that he does not consider any one of his stories "better than another," he can only mean that they all conform to the general standard for the short story which we discussed in our first section. Let us then, in the case of any pair of tales, take that standard as the first point of comparison, and inquire whether they both have that unity of effect, that freedom from excrescence, that firmly knit plot, that originality, and that brevity, which are characteristic of the genus.

<sup>1</sup> It would be more accurate to compare a fine one-act drama with a fine drama in five acts by the same author; the reader may supply the modern instance.

<sup>2</sup> Prescott's *Selections*, p. 322.

Having formed our opinion upon their general technical qualities, we may proceed, perhaps with more difficulty, to the second point of comparison, and inquire to which of the "kinds" or species discussed in our second section they belong. If they belong to different species,—if, for example, one is a plot-story like "The Gold-Bug" and the other a character-story like "Will o' the Mill"—we may raise, and possibly settle, the question: Which is the higher species? If they belong to the same species,—for example, a detective story of Poe's and one of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's,—which is the more impressive specimen of its kind? If the stories we have chosen seem to belong clearly to no one of our three main classes, they may profitably be compared with reference to each class in turn: we may inquire, in other words, which is the more impressive with respect to its characters, which with respect to its plot, which with respect to its atmosphere and setting.

After one has practised these methods of comparison for some time, one is fairly certain to conclude that some short stories of perhaps equal technical merit are of very unequal merit on other grounds. Let us take a case of quite glaring inequality: "The Signal-Man" and "The Man Who Was." Both are brief, original, firmly knit, free from excrescence, and of intense unity of effect. But the characters of "The Signal-Man" are essentially insignificant: a colorless narrator and a railway man distinguished only by a nervous hallucination. The characters of "The Man Who Was" are significant and brilliantly indicated representatives of the British, the Indian, and the Russian empires. The plot of "The Signal-Man" is a web of such incidents as afford recreation to societies for psychical research. The plot of "The Man Who Was" is involved with a question of the difference between Eastern and Western civilization, with a crisis in the relations of Russia and England, with

the memories of a great European war. The setting of "The Signal-Man" is a railway cut and a signal station—any station and any cut would have served as well. The setting of "The Man Who Was" is the mess-room of the White Hussars, reeking with "local color," from which the imagination is sent across the Punjab, through the Khybar Pass, and the mountains of Afghanistan, towards the northernmost limits of the Siberian wilderness. Such a comparison should leave no doubt as to which of the tales is the more valuable contribution to literature. It suggests that we may well add to our standards of criticism for the short story a standard which Aristotle set up for the criticism of tragedy, when he said that the fable must be "of a certain magnitude." In every short story that is permanently and deeply impressive we shall find that the author—whether by a suggestion of geographical breadth in his setting, or by historical or legendary depth in his plot, or by moral, social, or other significance in his characters, or by all combined—has given to his final effect a certain spatial, or temporal or ideal magnitude. To construct a short story "large" in all three dimensions is an extremely difficult and rare achievement.



## DESCRIPTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

An historical survey of all the varieties of brief fictitious narrative written in English may be found in Henry Seidel Canby's *The Short Story in English*, published by Henry Holt & Company, New York, 1909. *A Study of the Short Story*, by the same author and publisher, 1913, is a revised abridgment of the earlier work, with the addition of illustrative specimens. A special study in the influence of locality upon the development of the short story in America is Elias Lieberman's *The American Short Story*, published by The Editor: Ridgewood, New Jersey, 1912. See also the introduction to Charles Sears Baldwin's *American Short Stories*, published by Longmans, Green, and Co. A sketch of the development of the short story with reference to French, Italian, Spanish, German, Russian, and Scandinavian, as well as English, writers appears as the introduction to a collection of stories from various lands, *The Short-Story*, made by Brander Matthews, and published by the American Book Company, New York. Most of the authors represented in our collection are treated more or less fully in *The Development of the English Novel*, by Wilbur L. Cross. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1900), where they may profitably be viewed in relation to the main stream of fiction.

Most of the recent books on the short story were intended primarily to serve as practical manuals for the writer. This purpose, however, does not render them less useful to the student who desires merely to understand the nature and appreciate the merits of the form. Indeed, the surest way to a recognition of the art in "Rip Van Winkle"

or "Phoebe" is to study two or three of the books in the following list, to write a short story, and then to compare it with the work of O. Henry or Irving:

1. Albright, Evelyn May, *The Short Story—Its Principles and Structure*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

2. Barrett, Charles Raymond, *Short Story Writing: A Practical Treatise on the Art of the Short Story*. New York: The Baker and Taylor Company, 1900. (One of the earliest of the practical manuals.)

3. Esenwein, J. Berg, *Writing the Short Story: A Practical Handbook on the Rise, Structure, Writing, and Sale of the Modern Short Story*. New York: Hinds, Noble & Eldredge, 1909. (This book contains a useful bibliography, including a considerable list of magazine articles on the short story.)

4. Grabo, Carl H., *The Art of the Short Story*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914. (Interesting in its attempt to throw light upon the psychology of composition.)

5. Hamilton, Clayton, *The Materials and Methods of Fiction*. New York: The Baker and Taylor Company, 1908.

6. Hart, W. M., *Hawthorne and the Short Story*. Berkeley, California, 1900.

7. Matthews, Brander, *The Philosophy of the Short Story*. New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1901. ("So far as the author is aware, he had no predecessor in asserting that the Short-story differs from the novel essentially,—and not merely in the matter of length. So far as he knows, it was in the present paper the suggestion was first made that the Short-story is in reality a *genre*, a separate kind, a genus by itself.")

8. Perry, Bliss, *A Study of Prose Fiction*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1902. (A very clear and sound discussion of the elements of fiction. The short story is treated in Chapter XII.)

9. Pitkin, Walter B., *The Art and the Business of Story Writing*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912. ("An outgrowth of the belief that fiction has a technique no less definite, though much less rigid, than the technique of perspective drawing or of harmony and counterpoint in music.")

10. Prescott, F. C. (editor), *Selections from the Critical Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1909. (A convenient collection of Poe's most significant critical work, with an extended introductory discussion of his theories.)

11. Wells, Carolyn, *The Technique of the Mystery Story*. Springfield, Mass: The Home Correspondence School, 1913. (Somewhat diffuse, but rich in illustrative matter.)

A BOOK OF SHORT STORIES



# RIP VAN WINKLE

By WASHINGTON IRVING

A POSTHUMOUS WRITING OF DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER

By Woden, God of Saxons,  
From whence comes Wensday, that is Wodensday,  
Truth is a thing that ever I will keep  
Unto thylke day in which I creep into  
My sepulcher—— *Cartwright*

[The following tale was found among the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker, an old gentleman of New York, who was very curious in the Dutch history of the province, and the manners of the descendants from its primitive settlers. His historical researches, however, did not lie so much among books 5 as among men; for the former are lamentably scanty on his favorite topics; whereas he found the old burghers, and still more their wives, rich in that legendary lore so invaluable to true history. Whenever, therefore, he happened upon a genuine Dutch family, snugly shut up in its low-roofed farmhouse, 10 under a spreading sycamore, he looked upon it as a little clasped volume of black-letter, and studied it with the zeal of a book-worm.

The result of all these researches was a history of the province during the reign of the Dutch governors, which he published 15 some years since. There have been various opinions as to the literary character of his work, and, to tell the truth, it is not a whit better than it should be. Its chief merit is its scrupulous accuracy, which indeed was a little questioned on its first appearance, but has since been completely established; and it is 20 now admitted into all historical collections as a book of unquestionable authority.

The old gentleman died shortly after the publication of his work; and now that he is dead and gone, it cannot do much

harm to his memory to say that his time might have been much better employed in weightier labors. He, however, was apt to ride his hobby in his own way; and though it did now and then kick up the dust a little in the eyes of his neighbors, and grieve the spirit of some friends, for whom he felt the truest deference and affection, yet his errors and follies are remembered "more in sorrow than in anger," and it begins to be suspected that he never intended to injure or offend. But however his memory may be appreciated by critics, it is still held dear by many folk whose good opinion is well worth having; particularly by certain biscuit-bakers, who have gone so far as to imprint his likeness on their New Year cakes; and have thus given him a chance for immortality, almost equal to the being stamped on a Waterloo medal, or a Queen Anne's farthing.]

15 WHOEVER has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed, every hour of the day, produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains, and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapors about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

30 At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a village, whose shingle-roofs gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village, of great

antiquity, having been founded by some of the Dutch colonists in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of the good Peter Stuyvesant (may he rest in peace!), and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing within a few years, built of small yellow bricks brought from Holland, having latticed windows and gable fronts, surmounted with weathercocks. 5

In that same village, and in one of these very houses (which, to tell the precise truth, was sadly time-worn and weather-beaten), there lived, many years since, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, a simple, good-natured fellow, of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkles who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Christina. He inherited, however, but little of the martial character of his ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple, good-natured man; he was, moreover, a kind neighbor, and an obedient, hen-pecked husband. Indeed, to the latter circumstance might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity; for those men are most apt to be obsequious and conciliating abroad who are under the discipline of shrews at home. Their tempers, doubtless, are rendered pliant and malleable in the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation; and a curtain-lecture is worth all the sermons in the world for teaching the virtues of patience and long-suffering. A termagant wife may, therefore, in some respects, be considered a tolerable blessing; and, if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed. 30

Certain it is, that he was a great favorite among all the good wives of the village, who, as usual with the amiable sex, took his part in all family squabbles; and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening

gossipings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot  
5 marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village he was surrounded by a troop of them, hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; and not a dog would bark  
10 at him throughout the neighborhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor. It could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance, for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tar-  
15 tar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling-piece on his shoulder for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons.  
20 He would never refuse to assist a neighbor even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man at all country frolics for husking Indian corn or building stone fences; the women of the village, too, used to employ him to run their errands, and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging  
25 husbands would not do for them. In a word, Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact, he declared it was of no use to work on his farm;  
30 it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; everything about it went wrong, and would go wrong, in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields



than anywhere else; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some out-of-door work to do; so that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst conditioned farm in the neighborhood. 5

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes, of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather. 10

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife; so that he was fain to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house—the one side which, in truth, belongs to a hen-pecked husband. 25 30

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much hen-pecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle

regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting an honorable dog, he was as courageous an animal  
5 as ever scoured the woods; but what courage can withstand the ever-during and all-besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground, or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a  
10 sidelong glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows  
15 with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village, which held its sessions  
20 on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of His Majesty, George the Third. Here they used to sit in the shade through a long, lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been  
25 worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions that sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveler. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster,  
30 a dapper, learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junta were completely controlled

by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbors could tell the hour by his movements as accurately 5 as by a sun-dial. It is true he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every great man has his adherents), perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When anything that was read or related displeased him, he was 10 observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and to send forth short, frequent, and angry puffs; but when pleased, he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds; and sometimes, taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapor curl 15 about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this stronghold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquillity of the assemblage and call 20 the members all to naught; nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his 25 only alternative, to escape from the labor of the farm and clamor of his wife, was to take gun in hand and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow 30 sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it; but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his

master's face; and if dogs can feel pity, I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest  
5 parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favorite sport of squirrel shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned  
10 the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on his silent but majestic course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the  
15 sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bottom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs, and scarcely lighted  
20 by the reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on this scene; evening was gradually advancing; the mountains began to throw their long, blue shadows over the valleys; he saw that it would be dark long before he could reach the village, and he heaved a  
25 heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend, he heard a voice from a distance, hallooing, "Rip Van Winkle, Rip Van Winkle!" He looked round, but could see nothing but a crow winging its  
30 solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him, and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry ring through the still evening air: "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"—at the same time Wolf bristled up his back, and giving a low growl,

skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension stealing over him; he looked anxiously in the same direction, and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his 5 back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented place; but supposing it to be some one of the neighborhood in need of his assistance, he hastened down to yield it.

On nearer approach he was still more surprised at the 10 singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short, square-built old fellow, with thick bushy hair, and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion—a cloth jerkin strapped round the waist—several pair of breeches, the outer one of ample volume, decorated with 15 rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulder a stout keg that seemed full of liquor, and made signs for Rip to approach and assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance, Rip complied with his usual alacrity; 20 and mutually relieving one another, they clambered up a narrow gully, apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent. As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard long, rolling peals, like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine, or rather cleft, between lofty 25 rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to be the muttering of one of those transient thunder showers which often take place in mountain heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphi- 30 theater, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time Rip and his

companion had labored on in silence; for though the former marveled greatly what could be the object of carrying a keg of liquor up this wild mountain, yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown, 5 that inspired awe and checked familiarity.

On entering the amphitheater, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level spot in the center was a company of odd-looking personages playing at ninepins. They were dressed in a quaint, outlandish fashion; some 10 wore short doublets, others jerkins, with long knives in their belts, and most of them had enormous breeches of similar style with that of the guide's. Their visages, too, were peculiar: one had a large beard, broad face, and small, piggish eyes; the face of another seemed to consist entirely 15 of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugar-loaf hat, set off with a little red cock's tail. They all had beards of various shapes and colors. There was one who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance; he wore a laced doublet, 20 broad belt and hanger, high crowned hat and feather, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, with roses in them. The whole group reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting, in the parlor of Dominie Van Shaick, the village parson, and which had been brought over from Holland 25 at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip was, that, though these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal, the most melancholy party of pleasure he 30 had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled, echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals of thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them, they sud-

denly desisted from their play, and stared at him with such fixed, statue-like gaze, and such strange, uncouth, lack-luster countenances, that his heart turned within him, and his knees smote together. His companion now emptied the contents of the keg into large flagons, and made signs to him to wait upon the company. He obeyed with fear and trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence, and then returned to their game.

By degrees Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage, which he found had much of the flavor of excellent Hollands. He was naturally a thirsty soul, and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another; and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.

On waking, he found himself on the green knoll whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes—it was a bright, sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. “Surely,” thought Rip, “I have not slept here all night.” He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with a keg of liquor—the mountain ravine—the wild retreat among the rocks—the woe-begone party at ninepins—the flagon—“Oh! that flagon! that wicked flagon!” thought Rip—“what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle?”

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean, well-oiled fowling-piece, he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel incrustated with rust, the lock falling off, and the stock worm-eaten. He now suspected that the grave roisterers of the mountain had put a trick upon him,

and, having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf, too, had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him, and shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoes  
5 repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening's gambol, and if he met with any of the party to demand his dog and gun. As he rose to walk he found himself stiff  
10 in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity. "These mountain beds do not agree with me," thought Rip, "and if this frolic should lay me up with a fit of the rheumatism, I shall have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle!" With some difficulty he got down into the glen; he found  
15 the gully up which he and his companion had ascended the preceding evening; but to his astonishment a mountain stream was now foaming down it, leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs. He, however, made shift to scramble up its sides, working his toilsome  
20 way through thickets of birch, sassafras, and witch-hazel, and sometimes tripped up or entangled by the wild grapevines that twisted their coils or tendrils from tree to tree, and spread a kind of network in his path.

At length he reached to where the ravine had opened  
25 through the cliffs to the amphitheater; but no traces of such opening remained. The rocks presented a high, impenetrable wall, over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here,  
30 then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog; he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in air about a dry tree that overhung a sunny precipice; and who, secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the



poor man's perplexities. What was to be done? The morning was passing away, and Rip felt famished for want of his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and gun; he dreaded to meet his wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and, with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward. 5

As he approached the village he met a number of people, but none whom he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country round. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast their eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture, induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same, when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long! 10 15

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his gray beard. The dogs, too, not one of which he recognized for an old acquaintance, barked at him as he passed. The very village was altered; it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors—strange faces at the windows—everything was strange. His mind now misgave him; he began to doubt whether both he and the world around him were not bewitched. Surely this was his native village, which he had left but the day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains—there ran the silver Hudson at a distance—there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been. Rip was sorely perplexed. "That flagon last night," thought he, "has addled my poor head sadly!" 20 25 30

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay—the roof fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half-starved dog that looked like Wolf was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed. “My very dog,” sighed poor Rip, “has forgotten me!”

10 He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. This desolateness overcame all his connubial fears—he called loudly for his wife and children—the lonely chambers rang for a moment

15 with his voice, and then all again was silence.

He now hurried forth, and hastened to his old resort, the village inn—but it, too, was gone. A large, rickety wooden building stood in its place, with great gaping windows, some of them broken and mended with old hats and

20 petticoats, and over the door was painted, “The Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle.” Instead of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there now was reared a tall naked pole, with something on the top that looked like a red nightcap, and from it was flutter-

25 ing a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes;—all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognized on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George, under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe; but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The

30 red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was held in the hand instead of a scepter, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, GENERAL WASHINGTON.

There was, as usual, a crowd of folk about the door, but

none that Rip recollected. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquillity. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder, with his broad face, double chin, and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco smoke instead of idle speeches; or Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, doling forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these, a lean, bilious-looking fellow, with his pockets full of handbills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens—elections—members of Congress—liberty—Bunker's Hill—heroes of '76—and other words, which were a perfect Babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle. 5 10

The appearance of Rip, with his long grizzled beard, his rusty fowling-piece, his uncouth dress, and an army of women and children at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded round him, eying him from head to foot with great curiosity. The orator hustled up to him, and, drawing him partly aside, inquired "On which side he voted?" Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and, rising on tiptoe, inquired in his ear, "Whether he was Federal or Democrat?" Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat penetrating, as it were, into his very soul, demanded in an austere tone, "What brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder, and a mob at his heels; and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village?"—"Alas! gentlemen," cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, "I am a poor, quiet man, a 15 20 25 30

native of the place, and a loyal subject of the King, God bless him!"

Here a general shout burst from the by-standers—"A tory! a tory! a spy! a refugee! hustle him! away with him!"  
5 It was with great difficulty that the self-important man in the cocked hat restored order; and, having assumed a ten-fold austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit, what he came there for, and whom he was seeking? The poor man humbly assured him that he meant no harm,  
10 but merely came there in search of some of his neighbors, who used to keep about the tavern.

"Well—who are they?—name them."

Rip bethought himself a moment, and inquired, "Where's Nicholas Vedder?"

15 There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied, in a thin, piping voice, "Nicholas Vedder! Why, he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There was a wooden tombstone in the churchyard that used to tell all about him, but that's rotten and gone too."

20 "Where's Brom Dutcher?"

"Oh, he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the storming of Stony Point—others say he was drowned in a squall at the foot of Antony's Nose. I don't know—he never came back again."

25 "Where's Van Bummel, the schoolmaster?"

"He went off to the wars, too, was a great militia general, and is now in congress."

Rip's heart died away at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself thus alone  
30 in the world. Every answer puzzled him, too, by treating of such enormous lapses of time, and of matters which he could not understand: war—congress—Stony Point—he had no courage to ask after any more friends, but cried out in despair, "Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?"

"Oh, Rip Van Winkle!" exclaimed two or three, "oh, to be sure! that's Rip Van Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree."

Rip looked, and beheld a precise counterpart of himself, as he went up the mountain; apparently as lazy, and certainly as ragged. The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment, the man in the cocked hat demanded who he was, and what was his name.

"God knows," exclaimed he, at his wits' end; "I'm not myself—I'm somebody else—that's me yonder—no—that's somebody else got into my shoes—I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun, and everything's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!"

The by-standers began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly, and tap their fingers against their foreheads. There was a whisper, also, about securing the gun, and keeping the old fellow from doing mischief, at the very suggestion of which the self-important man in the cocked hat retired with some precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh, comely woman pressed through the throng to get a peep at the gray-bearded man. She had a chubby child in her arms, which, frightened at his looks, began to cry. "Hush, Rip," cried she, "hush, you little fool; the old man won't hurt you." The name of the child, the air of the mother, the tone of her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind. "What is your name, my good woman?" asked he.

"Judith Gardenier."

"And your father's name?"

"Ah, poor man, Rip Van Winkle was his name, but

it's twenty years since he went away from home with his gun, and never has been heard of since—his dog came home without him; but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by the Indians, nobody can tell. I was then  
5 but a little girl."

Rip had but one question more to ask; but he put it with a faltering voice:

"Where's your mother?"

"Oh, she, too, had died but a short time since; she broke  
10 a blood vessel in a fit of passion at a New England peddler."

There was a drop of comfort, at least, in this intelligence. The honest man could contain himself no longer. He caught his daughter and her child in his arms. "I am your  
15 father!" cried he—"Young Rip Van Winkle once—old Rip Van Winkle now!—Does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle?"

All stood amazed, until an old woman, tottering out from among the crowd, put her hand to her brow, and  
20 peering under it in his face for a moment, exclaimed, "Sure enough! It is Rip Van Winkle—it is himself! Welcome home again, old neighbor. Why, where have you been these twenty long years?"

Rip's story was soon told, for the whole twenty years  
25 had been to him but as one night. The neighbors stared when they heard it; some were seen to wink at each other, and put their tongues in their cheeks; and the self-important man in the cocked hat, who, when the alarm was over, had returned to the field, screwed down the  
30 corners of his mouth, and shook his head—upon which there was a general shaking of the head throughout the assemblage.

It was determined, however, to take the opinion of old Peter Vanderdonk, who was seen slowly advancing up the

road. He was a descendant of the historian of that name, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of the province. Peter was the most ancient inhabitant of the village, and well versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighborhood. He recollected Rip at once, and corroborated his story in the most satisfactory manner. He assured the company that it was a fact, handed down from his ancestor the historian, that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed that the great Hendrick Hudson, the first discoverer of the river and country, kept a kind of vigil there every twenty years, with his crew of the Half-moon; being permitted in this way to revisit the scenes of his enterprise, and keep a guardian eye upon the river and the great city called by his name. That his father had once seen them in their old Dutch dresses playing at ninepins in a hollow of the mountain; and that he himself had heard, one summer afternoon, the sound of their balls, like distant peals of thunder.

To make a long story short, the company broke up and returned to the more important concerns of the election. Rip's daughter took him home to live with her; she had a snug, well-furnished house, and a stout, cheery farmer for a husband, whom Rip recollected for one of the urchins that used to climb upon his back. As to Rip's son and heir, who was the ditto of himself, seen leaning against the tree, he was employed to work on the farm; but evinced an hereditary disposition to attend to anything else but his business.

Rip now resumed his old walks and habits; he soon found many of his former cronies, though all rather the worse for the wear and tear of time; and preferred making friends among the rising generation, with whom he soon grew into great favor.

Having nothing to do at home, and being arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench at the inn door, and was revered as one of the patriarchs of the village, and  
5 a chronicle of the old times "before the war." It was some time before he could get into the regular track of gossip, or could be made to comprehend the strange events that had taken place during his torpor. How that there had been a revolutionary war—that the country had thrown off  
10 the yoke of old England—and that, instead of being a subject of His Majesty, George III., he was now a free citizen of the United States. Rip, in fact, was no politician; the changes of states and empires made but little impression on him; but there was one species of despotism under which  
15 he had long groaned, and that was—petticoat government. Happily that was at an end; he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased, without dreading the tyranny of Dame Van Winkle. Whenever her name was mentioned, however,  
20 he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and cast up his eyes; which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate or joy at his deliverance.

He used to tell his story to every stranger that arrived at Mr. Doolittle's hotel. He was observed, at first, to  
25 vary on some points every time he told it, which was, doubtless, owing to his having so recently awaked. It at last settled down precisely to the tale I have related, and not a man, woman, or child in the neighborhood but knew it by heart. Some always pretended to doubt the reality  
30 of it, and insisted that Rip had been out of his head, and that this was one point on which he always remained flighty. The old Dutch inhabitants, however, almost universally gave it full credit. Even to this day they never hear a thunder storm of a summer afternoon about the



Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of ninepins; and it is a common wish of all hen-pecked husbands in the neighborhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon.

5

## NOTE

The foregoing tale, one would suspect, had been suggested to Mr. Knickerbocker by a little German superstition about the Emperor Frederick der Rothbart, and the Kypphäuser mountain: the subjoined note, however, which he had appended to the tale, shows that it is an absolute fact, narrated with his 10 usual fidelity.

"The story of Rip Van Winkle may seem incredible to many, but nevertheless I give it my full belief, for I know the vicinity of our old Dutch settlements to have been very subject to marvellous events and appearances. Indeed, I have heard many 15 stranger stories than this, in the villages along the Hudson; all of which were too well authenticated to admit of a doubt. I have even talked with Rip Van Winkle myself, who, when last I saw him, was a very venerable old man, and so perfectly rational and consistent on every other point, that I think no 20 conscientious person could refuse to take this into the bargain; nay, I have seen a certificate on the subject taken before a country justice and signed with a cross, in the justice's own handwriting. The story, therefore, is beyond the possibility of a doubt.

25

"D. K."

## POSTSCRIPT

The following are traveling notes from a memorandum book of Mr. Knickerbocker:

The Kaatsberg, or Catskill Mountains, have always been a region full of fable. The Indians considered them the abode of spirits, who influenced the weather, spreading sunshine or 30 clouds over the landscape, and sending good or bad hunting

seasons. They were ruled by an old squaw spirit, said to be their mother. She dwelt on the highest peak of the Catskills, and had charge of the doors of day and night to open and shut them at the proper hour. She hung up the new moon in the  
5 skies, and cut up the old ones into stars. In times of drought, if properly propitiated, she would spin light summer clouds out of cobwebs and morning dew, and send them off from the crest of the mountain, flake after flake, like flakes of carded cotton, to float in the air; until, dissolved by the heat of the  
10 sun, they would fall in gentle showers, causing the grass to spring, the fruits to ripen, and the corn to grow an inch an hour. If displeased, however, she would brew up clouds black as ink, sitting in the midst of them like a bottle-bellied spider in the midst of its web; and when these clouds broke, woe  
15 betide the valleys!

In old times, say the Indian traditions, there was a kind of Manitou or Spirit, who kept about the wildest recesses of the Catskill Mountains, and took a mischievous pleasure in wreaking all kinds of evils and vexations upon the red men. Some-  
20 times he would assume the form of a bear, a panther, or a deer, lead the bewildered hunter a weary chase through tangled forests and among ragged rocks; and then spring off with a loud ho! ho! leaving him aghast on the brink of a beetling precipice or raging torrent.

25 The favorite abode of this Manitou is still shown. It is a great rock or cliff on the loneliest part of the mountains, and, from the flowering vines which clamber about it, and the wild flowers which abound in its neighborhood, is known by the name of the Garden Rock. Near the foot of it is a small lake,  
30 the haunt of the solitary bittern, with water-snakes basking in the sun on the leaves of the pond-lilies which lie on the surface. This place was held in great awe by the Indians, inasmuch that the boldest hunter would not pursue his game within its precincts. Once upon a time, however, a hunter who had  
35 lost his way, penetrated to the Garden Rock, where he beheld a number of gourds placed in the crotches of trees. One of these he seized and made off with it, but in the hurry of his

retreat he let it fall among the rocks, when a great stream gushed forth, which washed him away and swept him down precipices, where he was dashed to pieces, and the stream made its way to the Hudson, and continues to flow to the present day; being the identical stream known by the name of the 5 Kaaterskill.

# THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL

A PARABLE <sup>1</sup>

By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

THE sexton stood in the porch of Milford meeting-house, pulling lustily at the bell-rope. The old people of the village came stooping along the street. Children with bright faces tript merrily beside their parents, or mimicked  
5 a graver gait in the conscious dignity of their Sunday clothes. Spruce bachelors looked sidelong at the pretty maidens, and fancied that the Sabbath sunshine made them prettier than on week-days. When the throng had mostly streamed into the porch, the sexton began to toll  
10 the bell, keeping his eye on the Reverend Mr. Hooper's door. The first glimpse of the clergyman's figure was the signal for the bell to cease its summons.

"But what has good Parson Hooper got upon his face?" cried the sexton in astonishment.

15 All within hearing immediately turned about, and beheld the semblance of Mr. Hooper pacing slowly in his meditative way towards the meeting-house. With one accord they started, expressing more wonder than if some strange minister were coming to dust the cushions of Mr.  
20 Hooper's pulpit.

"Are you sure it is our parson?" inquired Goodman Gray of the sexton.

<sup>1</sup> Another clergyman in New England, Mr. Joseph Moody, of York, Maine, who died about eighty years since, made himself remarkable by the same eccentricity that is here related of the Reverend Mr. Hooper. In his case, however, the symbol had a different import. In early life he had accidentally killed a beloved friend; and from that day till the hour of his own death he hid his face from men.

"Of a certainty it is good Mr. Hooper," replied the sexton. "He was to have exchanged pulpits with Parson Shute, of Westbury; but Parson Shute sent to excuse himself yesterday, being to preach a funeral sermon."

The cause of so much amazement may appear sufficiently slight. Mr. Hooper, a gentlemanly person of about thirty, though still a bachelor, was dressed with due clerical neatness, as if a careful wife had starched his band, and brushed the weekly dust from his Sunday's garb. There was but one thing remarkable in his appearance. Swathed about his forehead, and hanging down over his face so low as to be shaken by his breath, Mr. Hooper had on a black veil. On a nearer view it seemed to consist of two folds of crape, which entirely concealed his features except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight farther than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things. With this gloomy shade before him, good Mr. Hooper walked onward at a slow and quiet pace, stooping somewhat and looking on the ground, as is customary with abstracted men, yet nodding kindly to those of his parishioners who still waited on the meeting-house steps. But so wonder-struck were they that his greeting hardly met with a return.

"I can't really feel as if good Mr. Hooper's face was behind that piece of crape," said the sexton.

"I don't like it," muttered an old woman, as she hobbled into the meeting-house. "He has changed himself into something awful only by hiding his face."

"Our parson has gone mad!" cried Goodman Gray, following him across the threshold.

A rumor of some unaccountable phenomenon had preceded Mr. Hooper into the meeting-house, and set all the congregation astir. Few could refrain from twisting their heads towards the door; many stood upright and turned

directly about; while several little boys clambered upon the seats, and came down again with a terrible racket. There was a general bustle, a rustling of the women's gowns and shuffling of the men's feet, greatly at variance 5 with that hushed repose which should attend the entrance of the minister. But Mr. Hooper appeared not to notice the perturbation of his people. He entered with an almost noiseless step, bent his head mildly to the pews on each side, and bowed as he passed his oldest parishioner, a white- 10 haired great-grandsire, who occupied an arm-chair in the center of the aisle. It was strange to observe how slowly this venerable man became conscious of something singular in the appearance of his pastor. He seemed not fully to partake of the prevailing wonder till Mr. Hooper 15 had ascended the stairs, and showed himself in the pulpit face to face with his congregation except for the black veil. That mysterious emblem was never once withdrawn. It shook with his measured breath as he gave out the psalm; it threw its obscurity between him and the holy page as 20 he read the Scriptures; and while he prayed, the veil lay heavily on his uplifted countenance. Did he seek to hide it from the dread Being whom he was addressing?

Such was the effect of this simple piece of crape that more than one woman of delicate nerves was forced to 25 leave the meeting-house. Yet perhaps the pale-faced congregation was almost as fearful a sight to the minister as his black veil to them.

Mr. Hooper had the reputation of a good preacher, but not an energetic one: he strove to win his people heaven- 30 ward by mild, persuasive influences, rather than to drive them thither by the thunders of the Word. The sermon which he now delivered was marked by the same characteristics of style and manner as the general series of his pulpit oratory. But there was something either in the

sentiment of the discourse itself, or in the imagination of the auditors, which made it greatly the most powerful effort that they had ever heard from their pastor's lips. It was tinged rather more darkly than usual with the gentle gloom of Mr. Hooper's temperament. The subject had reference to secret sin, and those sad mysteries which we hide from our nearest and dearest, and would fain conceal from our own consciousness, even forgetting that the Omniscient can detect them. A subtle power was breathed into his words. Each member of the congregation, the most innocent girl, and the man of hardened breast, felt as if the preacher had crept upon them behind his awful veil, and discovered their hoarded iniquity of deed or thought. Many spread their clasped hands on their bosoms. There was nothing terrible in what Mr. Hooper said; at least, no violence; and yet, with every tremor of his melancholy voice the hearers quaked. An unsought pathos came hand in hand with awe. So sensible were the audience of some unwonted attribute in their minister, that they longed for a breath of wind to blow aside the veil, almost believing that a stranger's visage would be discovered, though the form, gesture, and voice were those of Mr. Hooper.

At the close of the service the people hurried out with indecorous confusion, eager to communicate their pent-up amazement, and conscious of lighter spirits the moment they lost sight of the black veil. Some gathered in little circles, huddled closely together, with their mouths all whispering in the center; some went homeward alone, wrapt in silent meditation; some talked loudly, and profaned the Sabbath-day with ostentatious laughter. A few shook their sagacious heads, intimating that they could penetrate the mystery; while one or two affirmed that there was no mystery at all, but only that Mr. Hooper's

eyes were so weakened by the midnight lamp as to require a shade. After a brief interval, forth came good Mr. Hooper also, in the rear of his flock. Turning his veiled face from one group to another, he paid due reverence to  
5 the hoary heads, saluted the middle-aged with kind dignity, as their friend and spiritual guide, greeted the young with mingled authority and love, and laid his hands on the little children's heads to bless them. Such was always his custom on the Sabbath-day. Strange and bewildered  
10 looks repaid him for his courtesy. None, as on former occasions, aspired to the honor of walking by their pastor's side. Old Squire Saunders, doubtless by an accidental lapse of memory, neglected to invite Mr. Hooper to his table, where the good clergyman had been wont to  
15 bless the food almost every Sunday since his settlement. He returned, therefore, to the parsonage, and, at the moment of closing the door, was observed to look back upon the people, all of whom had their eyes fixed upon the minister. A sad smile gleamed faintly from beneath  
20 the black veil, and flickered about his mouth, glimmering as he disappeared.

"How strange," said a lady, "that a simple black veil, such as any woman might wear on her bonnet, should become such a terrible thing on Mr. Hooper's face!"

25 "Something must surely be amiss with Mr. Hooper's intellects," observed her husband, the physician of the village. "But the strangest part of the affair is the effect of this vagary, even on a sober-minded man like myself. The black veil, though it covers only our pastor's face,  
30 throws its influence over his whole person, and makes him ghostlike from head to foot. Do you not feel it so?"

"Truly do I," replied the lady; "and I would not be alone with him for the world. I wonder he is not afraid to be alone with himself!"



"Men sometimes are so," said her husband.

The afternoon service was attended with similar circumstances. At its conclusion, the bell tolled for the funeral of a young lady. The relatives and friends were assembled in the house, and the more distant acquaintances stood about the door, speaking of the good qualities of the deceased, when their talk was interrupted by the appearance of Mr. Hooper, still covered with his black veil. It was now an appropriate emblem. The clergyman stepped into the room where the corpse was laid, and bent over the coffin to take a last farewell of his deceased parishioner. As he stooped, the veil hung straight down from his forehead, so that, if her eyelids had not been closed for ever, the dead maiden might have seen his face. Could Mr. Hooper be fearful of her glance, that he so hastily caught back the black veil? A person who watched the interview between the dead and living scrupled not to affirm that, at the instant when the clergyman's features were disclosed, the corpse had slightly shuddered, rustling the shroud and muslin cap, though the countenance retained the composure of death. A superstitious old woman was the only witness of this prodigy. From the coffin Mr. Hooper passed into the chamber of the mourners, and thence to the head of the staircase, to make the funeral prayer. It was a tender and heart-dissolving prayer, full of sorrow, yet so imbued with celestial hopes that the music of a heavenly harp, swept by the fingers of the dead, seemed faintly to be heard among the saddest accents of the minister. The people trembled, though they but darkly understood him, when he prayed that they, and himself, and all of mortal race, might be ready, as he trusted this young maiden had been, for the dreadful hour that should snatch the veil from their faces. The bearers went heavily forth, and the mourners followed,

saddening all the street, with the dead before them, and Mr. Hooper in the black veil behind.

"Why do you look back?" said one in the procession to his partner.

5 "I had a fancy," replied she, "that the minister and the maiden's spirit were walking hand in hand."

"And so had I at the same moment," said the other.

That night the handsomest couple in Milford village were to be joined in wedlock. Though reckoned a melan-  
10 choly man, Mr. Hooper had a placid cheerfulness for such occasions which often excited a sympathetic smile where livelier merriment would have been thrown away. There was no quality of his disposition which made him more beloved than this. The company at the wedding awaited  
15 his arrival with impatience, trusting that the strange awe which had gathered over him throughout the day would now be dispelled. But such was not the result. When Mr. Hooper came, the first thing that their eyes rested on was the same horrible black veil, which had added deeper  
20 gloom to the funeral, and could portend nothing but evil to the wedding. Such was its immediate effect on the guests, that a cloud seemed to have rolled duskily from beneath the black crape and dimmed the light of the candles. The bridal pair stood up before the minister. But  
25 the bride's cold fingers quivered in the tremulous hand of the bridegroom, and her deathlike paleness caused a whisper that the maiden who had been buried a few hours before was come from her grave to be married. If ever another wedding were so dismal, it was that famous one  
30 where they tolled the wedding knell. After performing the ceremony, Mr. Hooper raised a glass of wine to his lips, wishing happiness to the new-married couple, in a strain of mild pleasantry that ought to have brightened the features of the guests, like a cheerful gleam from the

hearth. At that instant, catching a glimpse of his figure in the looking-glass, the black veil involved his own spirit in the horror with which it overwhelmed all others. His frame shuddered—his lips grew white—he spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet—and rushed forth into the darkness. For the earth, too, had on her black veil. 5 ✓

The next day the whole village of Milford talked of little else than Parson Hooper's black veil. That, and the mystery concealed behind it, supplied a topic for discussion between acquaintances meeting in the street, and good women gossiping at their open windows. It was the first item of news that the tavern-keeper told to his guests. The children babbled of it on their way to school. One imitative little imp covered his face with an old black handkerchief, thereby so affrighting his playmates that the panic seized himself, and he well-nigh lost his wits by his own waggery. 15

It was remarkable that, of all the busybodies and impertinent people in the parish, not one ventured to put the plain question to Mr. Hooper, wherefore he did this thing. Hitherto, whenever there appeared the slightest call for such interference, he had never lacked advisers, nor shown himself averse to be guided by their judgment. If he erred at all, it was by so painful a degree of self-distrust that even the mildest censure would lead him to consider an indifferent action as a crime. Yet, though so well acquainted with this amiable weakness, no individual among his parishioners chose to make the black veil a subject of friendly remonstrance. There was a feeling of dread, neither plainly confessed nor carefully concealed, which caused each to shift the responsibility upon another, till at length it was found expedient to send a deputation of the church, in order to deal with Mr. Hooper about 30

the mystery before it should grow into a scandal. Never did an embassy so ill discharge its duties. The minister received them with friendly courtesy, but became silent after they were seated, leaving to his visitors the whole  
5 burden of introducing their important business. The topic, it might be supposed, was obvious enough. There was the black veil swathed round Mr. Hooper's forehead, and concealing every feature above his placid mouth, on which at times they could perceive the glimmering of  
10 a melancholy smile. But that piece of crape, to their imagination, seemed to hang down before his heart, the symbol of a fearful secret between him and them. Were the veil but cast aside they might speak freely of it, but not till then. Thus they sat a considerable time, speech-  
15 less, confused, and shrinking uneasily from Mr. Hooper's eye, which they felt to be fixed upon them with an invisible glance. Finally, the deputies returned abashed to their constituents, pronouncing the matter too weighty to be handled, except by a council of the churches, if indeed  
20 it might not require a general synod.

But there was one person in the village unappalled by the awe with which the black veil had impressed all beside herself. When the deputies returned without an explanation, or even venturing to demand one, she, with the calm  
25 energy of her character, determined to chase away the strange cloud that appeared to be settling round Mr. Hooper, every moment more darkly than before. As his plighted wife, it should be her privilege to know what the black veil concealed. At the minister's first visit, there-  
30 fore, she entered upon the subject with a direct simplicity which made the task easier both for him and her. After he had seated himself she fixed her eyes steadfastly upon the veil, but could discern nothing of the dreadful gloom that had so overawed the multitude; it was but a double

fold of crape, hanging down from his forehead to his mouth, and slightly stirring with his breath.

"No," said she aloud, and smiling, "there is nothing terrible in this piece of crape, except that it hides a face which I am always glad to look upon. Come, good sir, let the sun shine from behind the cloud. First lay aside your black veil: then tell me why you put it on."

Mr. Hooper's smile glimmered faintly.

"There is an hour to come," said he, "when all of us shall cast aside our veils. Take it not amiss, beloved friend, if I wear this piece of crape till then."

"Your words are a mystery too," returned the young lady. "Take away the veil from them at least."

"Elizabeth, I will," said he, "so far as my vow may suffer me. Know, then, this veil is a type and a symbol, and I am bound to wear it ever, both in light and darkness, in solitude and before the gaze of multitudes, and as with strangers, so with my familiar friends. No mortal eye will see it withdrawn. This dismal shade must separate me from the world: even you, Elizabeth, can never come behind it!"

"What grievous affliction hath befallen you," she earnestly inquired, "that you should thus darken your eyes for ever?"

"If it be a sign of mourning," replied Mr. Hooper, "I, perhaps, like most other mortals, have sorrows dark enough to be typified by a black veil."

"But what if the world will not believe that it is the type of an innocent sorrow?" urged Elizabeth. "Beloved and respected as you are, there may be whispers that you hide your face under the consciousness of secret sin. For the sake of your holy office, do away this scandal!"

The color rose into her cheeks as she intimated the nature of the rumors that were already abroad in the village.

But Mr. Hooper's mildness did not forsake him. He even smiled again—that same sad smile, which always appeared like a faint glimmering of light proceeding from the obscurity beneath the veil.

5 “If I hide my face for sorrow, there is cause enough,” he merely replied; “and if I cover it for secret sin, what mortal might not do the same?”

And with this gentle but unconquerable obstinacy did he resist all her entreaties. At length Elizabeth sat silent.  
10 For a few moments she appeared lost in thought, considering, probably, what new methods might be tried to withdraw her lover from so dark a fantasy, which, if it had no other meaning, was perhaps a symptom of mental disease. Though of a firmer character than his own, the  
15 tears rolled down her cheeks. But in an instant, as it were, a new feeling took the place of sorrow: her eyes were fixed insensibly on the black veil, when, like a sudden twilight in the air, its terrors fell around her. She arose, and stood trembling before him.

20 “And do you feel it then at last?” said he mournfully.

She made no reply, but covered her eyes with her hand, and turned to leave the room. He rushed forward and caught her arm.

“Have patience with me, Elizabeth!” cried he passionately.  
25 “Do not desert me, though this veil must be between us here on earth. Be mine, and hereafter there shall be no veil over my face, no darkness between our souls! It is but a mortal veil—it is not for eternity! Oh! you know not how lonely I am, and how frightened, to be  
30 alone behind my black veil. Do not leave me in this miserable obscurity for ever!”

“Lift the veil but once and look me in the face,” said she.

“Never! It cannot be!” replied Mr. Hooper.

“Then, farewell!” said Elizabeth.

She withdrew her arm from his grasp and slowly departed, pausing at the door to give one long, shuddering gaze, that seemed almost to penetrate the mystery of the black veil. But even amid his grief Mr. Hooper smiled to think that only a material emblem had separated him from happiness, though the horrors which it shadowed forth must be drawn darkly between the fondest of lovers.

From that time no attempts were made to remove Mr. Hooper's black veil, or, by a direct appeal, to discover the secret which it was supposed to hide. By persons who claimed a superiority to popular prejudice it was reckoned merely an eccentric whim, such as often mingles with the sober actions of men otherwise rational, and tinges them all with its own semblance of insanity. But with the multitude good Mr. Hooper was irreparably a bugbear. He could not walk the streets with any peace of mind, so conscious was he that the gentle and timid would turn aside to avoid him, and that others would make it a point of hardihood to throw themselves in his way. The impertinence of the latter class compelled him to give up his customary walk at sunset to the burial-ground; for when he leaned pensively over the gate, there would always be faces behind the grave-stones peeping at his black veil. A fable went the rounds that the stare of the dead people drove him thence. It grieved him to the very depth of his kind heart to observe how the children fled from his approach, breaking up their merriest sports while his melancholy figure was yet afar off. Their instinctive dread caused him to feel more strongly than aught else that a preternatural horror was interwoven with the threads of the black crape. In truth, his own antipathy to the veil was known to be so great that he never willingly passed before a mirror, nor stooped to drink at a still fountain, lest in its peaceful bosom he should be affrighted

by himself. This was what gave plausibility to the whispers, that Mr. Hooper's conscience tortured him for some great crime too horrible to be entirely concealed, or otherwise than so obscurely intimated. Thus from beneath  
5 the black veil there rolled a cloud into the sunshine, an ambiguity of sin or sorrow, which enveloped the poor minister, so that love or sympathy could never reach him. It was said that ghost and fiend consorted with him there. With self-shudderings and outward terrors he walked  
10 continually in its shadow, groping darkly within his own soul, or gazing through a medium that saddened the whole world. Even the lawless wind, it was believed, respected his dreadful secret and never blew aside the veil. But still good Mr. Hooper sadly smiled at the pale visages of the  
15 worldly throng as he passed by.

Among all its bad influences, the black veil had the one desirable effect of making its wearer a very efficient clergyman. By the aid of his mysterious emblem—for there was no other apparent cause—he became a man of awful  
20 power over souls that were in agony for sin. His converts always regarded him with a dread peculiar to themselves, affirming, though but figuratively, that, before he brought them to celestial light, they had been with him behind the black veil. Its gloom, indeed, enabled him to sym-  
✓ pathize with all dark affections. Dying sinners cried  
25 aloud for Mr. Hooper, and would not yield their breath till he appeared; though ever, as he stooped to whisper consolation, they shuddered at the veiled face so near their own. Such were the terrors of the black veil, even when  
30 Death had bared his visage! Strangers came long distances to attend service at his church, with the mere idle purpose of gazing at his figure, because it was forbidden them to behold his face. But many were made to quake ere they departed! Once, during Governor Belcher's ad-



ministration, Mr. Hooper was appointed to preach the election sermon. Covered with his black veil, he stood before the chief magistrate, the council, and the representatives, and wrought so deep an impression that the legislative measures of that year were characterized by all the gloom and piety of our earliest ancestral sway. 5

In this manner Mr. Hooper spent a long life, irreproachable in outward act, yet shrouded in dismal suspicions; kind and loving, though unloved, and dimly feared; a man apart from men, shunned in their health and joy, but ever summoned to their aid in mortal anguish. As years wore on, shedding their snows above his sable veil, he acquired a name throughout the New England churches, and they called him Father Hooper. Nearly all his parishioners who were of mature age when he was settled had been borne away by many a funeral: he had one congregation in the church, and a more crowded one in the churchyard; and having wrought so late into the evening, and done his work so well, it was now good Father Hooper's turn to rest. 10 15 20

Several persons were visible by the shaded candlelight in the death-chamber of the old clergyman. Natural connections he had none. But there was the decorously grave though unmoved physician, seeking only to mitigate the last pangs of the patient whom he could not save. There were the deacons, and other eminently pious members of his church. There, also, was the Reverend Mr. Clark, of Westbury, a young and zealous divine, who had ridden in haste to pray by the bedside of the expiring minister. There was the nurse, no hired handmaiden of death, but one whose calm affection had endured thus long in secrecy, in solitude, amid the chill of age, and would not perish, even at the dying hour. Who, but Elizabeth! And there lay the hoary head of good Father Hooper upon 25 30

the death-pillow, with the black veil still swathed about his brow and reaching down over his face, so that each more difficult gasp of his faint breath caused it to stir. All through life that piece of crape had hung between him and  
5 the world: it had separated him from cheerful brotherhood and woman's love, and kept him in that saddest of all prisons, his own heart; and still it lay upon his face, as if to deepen the gloom of his darksome chamber, and shade him from the sunshine of eternity.

10 For some time previous his mind had been confused, wavering doubtfully between the past and the present, and hovering forward, as it were, at intervals, into the indistinctness of the world to come. There had been feverish turns, which tossed him from side to side, and wore away  
15 what little strength he had. But in his most convulsive struggles, and in the wildest vagaries of his intellect, when no other thought retained its sober influence, he still showed an awful solicitude lest the black veil should slip aside. Even if his bewildered soul could have forgotten,  
20 there was a faithful woman at his pillow, who, with averted eyes, would have covered that aged face, which she had last beheld in the comeliness of manhood. At length the death-stricken old man lay quietly in the torpor of mental and bodily exhaustion, with an imperceptible pulse,  
25 and breath that grew fainter and fainter, except when a long, deep, and irregular inspiration seemed to prelude the flight of his spirit.

The minister of Westbury approached the bedside.

“Venerable Father Hooper,” said he, “the moment of  
30 your release is at hand. Are you ready for the lifting of the veil that shuts in time from eternity?”

Father Hooper at first replied merely by a feeble motion of his head; then, apprehensive, perhaps, that his meaning might be doubtful, he exerted himself to speak.

"Yea," said he, in faint accents, "my soul hath a patient weariness until that veil be lifted."

"And is it fitting," resumed the Reverend Mr. Clark, "that a man so given to prayer, of such a blameless example, holy in deed and thought, so far as mortal judgment may pronounce; is it fitting that a father in the church should leave a shadow on his memory, that may seem to blacken a life so pure? I pray you, my venerable brother, let not this thing be! Suffer us to be gladdened by your triumphant aspect, as you go to your reward. Before the veil of eternity be lifted, let me cast aside this black veil from your face!"

And thus speaking, the Reverend Mr. Clark bent forward to reveal the mystery of so many years. But exerting a sudden energy that made all the beholders stand aghast, Father Hooper snatched both his hands from beneath the bed-clothes, and pressed them strongly on the black veil, resolute to struggle if the minister of West-bury would contend with a dying man.

"Never!" cried the veiled clergyman. "On earth, never!"

"Dark old man!" exclaimed the affrighted minister, "with what horrible crime upon your soul are you now passing to the judgment?"

Father Hooper's breath heaved; it rattled in his throat; but, with a mighty effort, grasping forward with his hands, he caught hold of life, and held it back till he should speak. He even raised himself in bed; and there he sat, shivering with the arms of death around him, while the black veil hung down, awful, at that last moment, in the gathered terrors of a lifetime. And yet the faint, sad smile, so often there, now seemed to glimmer from its obscurity, and linger on Father Hooper's lips.

"Why do you tremble at me alone?" cried he, turning

his veiled face round the circle of pale spectators. "Tremble also at each other! Have men avoided me, and women shown no pity, and children screamed and fled, only for my black veil? What but the mystery which it obscurely  
5 typified has made this piece of crape so awful? When the friend shows his inmost heart to his friend; the lover to his best beloved; when man does not vainly shrink from the eye of his Creator, loathsomely treasuring up the secret of his sin; then deem me a monster, for the symbol  
10 beneath which I have lived, and die! I look around me, and, lo! on every visage a black veil!"

While his auditors shrank from one another in mutual affright, Father Hooper fell back upon his pillow, a veiled corpse, with a faint smile lingering on the lips. Still veiled,  
15 they laid him in his coffin, and a veiled corpse they bore him to the grave. The grass of many years has sprung up and withered on that grave, the burial-stone is moss-grown, and good Mr. Hooper's face is dust; but awful is still the thought that it mouldered beneath the black veil!

## ETHAN BRAND

By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

BARTRAM the lime-burner, a rough, heavy-looking man, begrimed with charcoal, sat watching his kiln, at nightfall, while his little son played at building houses with the scattered fragments of marble, when, on the hillside below them, they heard a roar of laughter, not mirthful, but slow, and even solemn, like a wind shaking the boughs of the forest. 5

"Father, what is that?" asked the little boy, leaving his play, and pressing betwixt his father's knees.

"O, some drunken man, I suppose," answered the lime-burner; "some merry fellow from the bar-room in the village, who dared not laugh loud enough within doors lest he should blow the roof of the house off. So here he is, shaking his jolly sides at the foot of Graylock." 10

"But, father," said the child, more sensitive than the obtuse, middle-aged clown, "he does not laugh like a man that is glad. So the noise frightens me!" 15

"Don't be a fool, child!" cried his father, gruffly. "You will never make a man, I do believe; there is too much of your mother in you. I have known the rustling of a leaf startle you. Hark! Here comes the merry fellow now. You shall see that there is no harm in him." 20

Bartram and his little son, while they were talking thus, sat watching the same lime-kiln that had been the scene of Ethan Brand's solitary and meditative life, before he began his search for the Unpardonable Sin. Many years, as we have seen, had now elapsed, since that portentous night when the IDEA was first developed. The kiln, how- 25

ever, on the mountain-side, stood unimpaired, and was in nothing changed since he had thrown his dark thoughts into the intense glow of its furnace, and melted them, as it were, into the one thought that took possession of his life.

5 It was a rude, round, tower-like structure, about twenty feet high, heavily built of rough stones, and with a hillock of earth heaped about the larger part of its circumference; so that the blocks and fragments of marble might be drawn by cart-loads, and thrown in at the top. There was an  
10 opening at the bottom of the tower, like an oven-mouth, but large enough to admit a man in a stooping posture, and provided with a massive iron door. With the smoke and jets of flame issuing from the chinks and crevices of this door, which seemed to give admittance into the hillside, it  
15 resembled nothing so much as the private entrance to the infernal regions, which the shepherds of the Delectable Mountains were accustomed to show to pilgrims.

There are many such lime-kilns in that tract of country, for the purpose of burning the white marble which com-  
20 poses a large part of the substance of the hills. Some of them, built years ago, and long deserted, with weeds growing in the vacant round of the interior, which is open to the sky, and grass and wild-flowers rooting themselves into the chinks of the stones, look already like relics of  
25 antiquity, and may yet be overspread with the lichens of centuries to come. Others, where the lime-burner still feeds his daily and night-long fire, afford points of interest to the wanderer among the hills, who seats himself on a log of wood or a fragment of marble, to hold a chat with the  
30 solitary man. It is a lonesome, and, when the character is inclined to thought, may be an intensely thoughtful occupation; as it proved in the case of Ethan Brand, who had mused to such strange purpose, in days gone by, while the fire in this very kiln was burning.

The man who now watched the fire was of a different order, and troubled himself with no thoughts save the very few that were requisite to his business. At frequent intervals, he flung back the clashing weight of the iron door, and, turning his face from the insufferable glare, thrust in huge logs of oak, or stirred the immense brands with a long pole. Within the furnace were seen the curling and riotous flames, and the burning marble, almost molten with the intensity of heat; while without, the reflection of the fire quivered on the dark intricacy of the surrounding forest, and showed in the foreground a bright and ruddy little picture of the hut, the spring beside its door, the athletic and coal-begrimed figure of the lime-burner, and the half-frightened child, shrinking into the protection of his father's shadow. And when again the iron door was closed, then reappeared the tender light of the half-full moon, which vainly strove to trace out the indistinct shapes of the neighboring mountains; and, in the upper sky, there was a flitting congregation of clouds, still faintly tinged with the rosy sunset, though thus far down into the valley the sunshine had vanished long and long ago.

The little boy now crept still closer to his father, as footsteps were heard ascending the hillside, and a human form thrust aside the bushes that clustered beneath the trees.

"Halloo! who is it?" cried the lime-burner, vexed at his son's timidity, yet half infected by it. "Come forward, and show yourself, like a man, or I'll fling this chunk of marble at your head!"

"You offer me a rough welcome," said a gloomy voice, as the unknown man drew nigh. "Yet I neither claim nor desire a kinder one, even at my own fireside."

To obtain a distincter view, Bartram threw open the iron door of the kiln, whence immediately issued a gush of fierce light, that smote full upon the stranger's face and

figure. To a careless eye there appeared nothing very remarkable in his aspect, which was that of a man in a coarse, brown, country-made suit of clothes, tall and thin, with the staff and heavy shoes of a wayfarer. As he advanced, he  
5 fixed his eyes—which were very bright—intently upon the brightness of the furnace, as if he beheld, or expected to behold, some object worthy of note within it.

“Good evening, stranger,” said the lime-burner; “whence come you, so late in the day?”

10 “I come from my search,” answered the wayfarer; “for, at last, it is finished.”

“Drunk!—or crazy!” muttered Bartram to himself. “I shall have trouble with the fellow. The sooner I drive him away, the better.”

15 The little boy, all in a tremble, whispered to his father, and begged him to shut the door of the kiln, so that there might not be so much light; for that there was something in the man’s face which he was afraid to look at, yet could not look away from. And, indeed, even the lime-burner’s  
20 dull and torpid sense began to be impressed by an indescribable something in that thin, rugged, thoughtful visage, with the grizzled hair hanging wildly about it, and those deeply sunken eyes, which gleamed like fires within the entrance of a mysterious cavern. But, as he closed the  
25 door, the stranger turned towards him, and spoke in a quiet, familiar way, that made Bartram feel as if he were a sane and sensible man, after all.

“Your task draws to an end, I see,” said he. “This marble has already been burning three days. A few hours  
30 more will convert the stone to lime.”

“Why, who are you?” exclaimed the lime-burner. “You seem as well acquainted with my business as I am myself.”

“And well I may be,” said the stranger; “for I followed



the same craft many a long year, and here, too, on this very spot. But you are a new-comer in these parts. Did you never hear of Ethan Brand?"

"The man that went in search of the Unpardonable Sin?" asked Bartram, with a laugh.

"The same," answered the stranger. "He has found what he sought, and therefore he comes back again."

"What! then you are Ethan Brand himself?" cried the lime-burner, in amazement. "I am a new-comer here, as you say, and they call it eighteen years since you left the foot of Graylock. But, I can tell you, the good folks still talk about Ethan Brand, in the village yonder, and what a strange errand took him away from his lime-kiln. Well, and so you have found the Unpardonable Sin?"

"Even so!" said the stranger, calmly.

"If the question is a fair one," proceeded Bartram, "Where might it be?"

Ethan Brand laid his finger on his own heart.

"Here!" replied he.

And then, without mirth in his countenance, but as if moved by an involuntary recognition of the infinite absurdity of seeking throughout the world for what was the closest of all things to himself, and looking into every heart, save his own, for what was hidden in no other breast, he broke into a laugh of scorn. It was the same slow, heavy laugh, that had almost appalled the lime-burner when it heralded the wayfarer's approach.

The solitary mountain-side was made dismal by it. Laughter, when out of place, mistimed, or bursting forth from a disordered state of feeling, may be the most terrible modulation of the human voice. The laughter of one asleep, even if it be a little child,—the madman's laugh,—the wild, screaming laugh of a born idiot,—are sounds that we sometimes tremble to hear, and would always

willingly forget. Poets have imagined no utterance of fiends or hobgoblins so fearfully appropriate as a laugh. And even the obtuse lime-burner felt his nerves shaken, as this strange man looked inward at his own heart, and burst  
5 into laughter that rolled away into the night, and was indistinctly reverberated among the hills.

“Joe,” said he to his little son, “scamper down to the tavern in the village, and tell the jolly fellows there that Ethan Brand has come back, and that he has found the  
10 Unpardonable Sin!”

The boy darted away on his errand, to which Ethan Brand made no objection, nor seemed hardly to notice it. He sat on a log of wood, looking steadfastly at the iron door of the kiln. When the child was out of sight, and his swift  
15 and light footsteps ceased to be heard treading first on the fallen leaves and then on the rocky mountain-path, the lime-burner began to regret his departure. He felt that the little fellow’s presence had been a barrier between his guest and himself, and that he must now deal, heart to  
20 heart, with a man who, on his own confession, had committed the one only crime for which Heaven could afford no mercy. That crime, in its indistinct blackness, seemed to overshadow him. The lime-burner’s own sins rose up within him, and made his memory riotous with a throng of  
25 evil shapes that asserted their kindred with the Master Sin, whatever it might be, which it was within the scope of man’s corrupted nature to conceive and cherish. They were all of one family; they went to and fro between his breast and Ethan Brand’s, and carried dark greetings from  
30 one to the other.

Then Bartram remembered the stories which had grown traditionary in reference to this strange man, who had come upon him like a shadow of the night, and was making himself at home in his old place, after so long absence that

the dead people, dead and buried for years, would have had more right to be at home, in any familiar spot, than he. Ethan Brand, it was said, had conversed with Satan himself in the lurid blaze of this very kiln. The legend had been matter of mirth heretofore, but looked grisly now. According to this tale, before Ethan Brand departed on his search, he had been accustomed to evoke a fiend from the hot furnace of the lime-kiln, night after night, in order to confer with him about the Unpardonable Sin; the man and the fiend each laboring to frame the image of some mode of guilt which could neither be atoned for nor forgiven. And, with the first gleam of light upon the mountain-top, the fiend crept in at the iron door, there to abide the intensest element of fire, until again summoned forth to share in the ~~dreadful~~ task of extending man's possible guilt beyond the scope of Heaven's else infinite mercy.

While the lime-burner was struggling with the horror of these thoughts, Ethan Brand rose from the log, and flung open the door of the kiln. The action was in such accordance with the idea in Bartram's mind, that he almost expected to see the Evil One issue forth, red-hot from the raging furnace.

"Hold! hold!" cried he, with a tremulous attempt to laugh; for he was ashamed of his fears, although they overmastered him. "Don't, for mercy's sake, bring out your Devil now!"

"Man!" sternly replied Ethan Brand, "what need have I of the Devil? I have left him behind me, on my track. It is with such half-way sinners as you that he busies himself. Fear not, because I open the door. I do but act by old custom, and am going to trim your fire, like a lime-burner, as I was once."

He stirred the vast coals, thrust in more wood, and bent forward to gaze into the hollow prison-house of the fire,

regardless of the fierce glow that reddened upon his face. The lime-burner sat watching him, and half suspected his strange guest of a purpose, if not to evoke a fiend, at least to plunge bodily into the flames, and thus vanish from the sight of man. Ethan Brand, however, drew quietly back, and closed the door of the kiln.

"I have looked," said he, "into many a human heart that was seven times hotter with sinful passions than yonder furnace is with fire. But I found not there what I sought. No, not the Unpardonable Sin!"

"What is the Unpardonable Sin?" asked the lime-burner; and then he shrank farther from his companion, trembling lest his question should be answered.

"It is a sin that grew within my own breast," replied Ethan Brand, standing erect, with a pride that distinguishes all enthusiasts of his stamp. "A sin that grew nowhere else! The sin of an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims! The only sin that deserves a recompense of immortal agony! Freely, were it to do again, would I incur the guilt. Unshrinkingly I accept the retribution!"

"The man's head is turned," muttered the lime-burner to himself. "He may be a sinner, like the rest of us,—nothing more likely,—but, I'll be sworn, he is a madman too."

Nevertheless, he felt uncomfortable at his situation, alone with Ethan Brand on the wild mountain-side, and was right glad to hear the rough murmur of tongues, and the footsteps of what seemed a pretty numerous party, stumbling over the stones and rustling through the underbrush. Soon appeared the whole lazy regiment that was wont to infest the village tavern, comprehending three or four individuals who had drunk flip beside the bar-room

fire through all the winters, and smoked their pipes beneath the stoop through all the summers, since Ethan Brand's departure. Laughing boisterously, and mingling all their voices together in unceremonious talk, they now burst into the moonshine and narrow streaks of firelight 5 that illuminated the open space before the lime-kiln. Bartram set the door ajar again, flooding the spot with light, that the whole company might get a fair view of Ethan Brand, and he of them.

There, among other old acquaintances, was a once 10 ubiquitous man, now almost extinct, but whom we were formerly sure to encounter at the hotel of every thriving village throughout the country. It was the stage-agent. The present specimen of the genus was a wilted and smoke-dried man, wrinkled and red-nosed, in a smartly cut, 15 brown, bob-tailed coat, with brass buttons, who, for a length of time unknown, had kept his desk and corner in the bar-room, and was still puffing what seemed to be the same cigar that he had lighted twenty years before. He had great fame as a dry joker, though, perhaps, less 20 on account of any intrinsic humor than from a certain flavor of brandy-toddy and tobacco-smoke, which impregnated all his ideas and expressions, as well as his person. Another well-remembered though strangely altered face was that of Lawyer Giles, as people still called him in 25 courtesy; an elderly ragamuffin, in his soiled shirt-sleeves and tow-cloth trousers. This poor fellow had been an attorney, in what he called his better days, a sharp practitioner, and in great vogue among the village litigants; but flip, and sling, and toddy, and cocktails, imbibed at 30 all hours, morning, noon, and night, had caused him to slide from intellectual to various kinds and degrees of bodily labor, till, at last, to adopt his own phrase, he slid into a soap-vat. In other words, Giles was now a soap-

boiler, in a small way. He had come to be but the fragment of a human being, a part of one foot having been chopped off by an axe, and an entire hand torn away by the devilish grip of a steam-engine. Yet, though the corporeal hand was gone, a spiritual member remained; for, stretching forth the stump, Giles steadfastly averred that he felt an invisible thumb and fingers with as vivid a sensation as before the real ones were amputated. A maimed and miserable wretch he was; but one, nevertheless, whom the world could not trample on, and had no right to scorn, either in this or any previous stage of his misfortunes, since he had still kept up the courage and spirit of a man, asked nothing in charity, and with his one hand—and that the left one—fought a stern battle against want and hostile circumstances.

Among the throng too, came another personage, who, with certain points of similarity to Lawyer Giles, had many more of difference. It was the village doctor; a man of some fifty years, whom, at an earlier period of his life, we introduced as paying a professional visit to Ethan Brand during the latter's supposed insanity. He was now a purple-visaged, rude, and brutal, yet half-gentlemanly figure, with something wild, ruined, and desperate in his talk, and in all the details of his gesture and manners. Brandy possessed this man like an evil spirit, and made him as surly and savage as a wild beast, and as miserable as a lost soul; but there was supposed to be in him such wonderful skill, such native gifts of healing, beyond any which medical science could impart, that society caught hold of him, and would not let him sink out of its reach. So, swaying to and fro upon his horse, and grumbling thick accents at the bedside, he visited all the sick-chambers for miles about among the mountain towns, and sometimes raised a dying man, as it were, by miracle, or quite

as often, no doubt, sent his patient to a grave that was dug many a year too soon. The doctor had an everlasting pipe in his mouth, and, as somebody said, in allusion to his habit of swearing, it was always alight with hell-fire.

These three worthies pressed forward, and greeted 5 Ethan Brand each after his own fashion, earnestly inviting him to partake of the contents of a certain black bottle, in which, as they averred, he would find something far better worth seeking for than the Unpardonable Sin. No mind, which has wrought itself by intense and 10 solitary meditation into a high state of enthusiasm, can endure the kind of contact with low and vulgar modes of thought and feeling to which Ethan Brand was now subjected. It made him doubt—and, strange to say, it was a painful doubt—whether he had indeed found the Un- 15 pardonable Sin and found it within himself. The whole question on which he had exhausted life, and more than life, looked like a delusion.

“Leave me,” he said bitterly, “ye brute beasts, that have made yourselves so, shrivelling up your souls with 20 fiery liquors! I have done with you. Years and years ago, I groped into your hearts, and found nothing there for my purpose. Get ye gone!”

“Why, you uncivil scoundrel,” cried the fierce doctor, “is that the way you respond to the kindness of your best 25 friends? Then let me tell you the truth. You have no more found the Unpardonable Sin than yonder boy Joe has. You are but a crazy fellow,—I told you so twenty years ago,—neither better nor worse than a crazy fellow, and the fit companion of old Humphrey, here!” 30

He pointed to an old man, shabbily dressed, with long white hair, thin visage, and unsteady eyes. For some years past this aged person had been wandering about among the hills, inquiring of all travelers whom he met

for his daughter. The girl, it seemed, had gone off with a company of circus-performers; and occasionally tidings of her came to the village, and fine stories were told of her glittering appearance as she rode on horse-back in the ring, or performed marvellous feats on the tight-rope.

The white-haired father now approached Ethan Brand, and gazed unsteadily into his face.

"They tell me you have been all over the earth," said he, wringing his hands with earnestness. "You must have seen my daughter, for she makes a grand figure in the world, and everybody goes to see her. Did she send any word to her old father, or say when she was coming back?"

Ethan Brand's eye quailed beneath the old man's. That daughter, from whom he so earnestly desired a word of greeting, was the Esther of our tale, the very girl whom, with such cold and remorseless purpose, Ethan Brand had made the subject of a psychological experiment, and wasted, absorbed, and perhaps annihilated her soul, in the process.

"Yes," murmured he, turning away from the hoary wanderer; "it is no delusion. There is an Unpardonable Sin!"

While these things were passing, a merry scene was going forward in the area of cheerful light, beside the spring and before the door of the hut. A number of the youth of the village, young men and girls, had hurried up the hill-side, impelled by curiosity to see Ethan Brand, the hero of so many a legend familiar to their childhood. Finding nothing, however, very remarkable in his aspect,—nothing but a sunburnt wayfarer, in plain garb and dusty shoes, who sat looking into the fire, as if he fancied pictures among the coals,—these young people speedily grew tired of observing him. As it happened, there was other



amusement at hand. An old German Jew, traveling with a diorama on his back, was passing down the mountain-road towards the village just as the party turned aside from it, and, in hopes of eking out the profits of the day, the showman had kept them company to the lime-kiln.

“Come, old Dutchman,” cried one of the young men, “let us see your pictures, if you can swear they are worth looking at!”

“O yes, Captain,” answered the Jew,—whether as a matter of courtesy or craft, he styled everybody Captain, —“I shall show you, indeed, some very superb pictures!”

So, placing his box in a proper position, he invited the young men and girls to look through the glass orifices of the machine, and proceeded to exhibit a series of the most outrageous scratchings and daubings, as specimens of the fine arts, that ever an itinerant showman had the face to impose upon his circle of spectators. The pictures were worn out, moreover, tattered, full of cracks and wrinkles, dingy with tobacco-smoke, and otherwise in a most pitiable condition. Some purported to be cities, public edifices, and ruined castles in Europe; others represented Napoleon’s battles and Nelson’s sea-fights; and in the midst of these would be seen a gigantic, brown, hairy hand,—which might have been mistaken for the Hand of Destiny, though in truth, it was only the showman’s,—pointing its forefinger to various scenes of the conflict, while its owner gave historical illustrations. When, with much merri-  
ment at its abominable deficiency of merit, the exhibition was concluded, the German bade little Joe put his head into the box. Viewed through the magnifying-glasses, the boy’s round, rosy visage assumed the strangest imaginable aspect of an immense Titanic child, the mouth grinning broadly, and the eyes and every other feature overflowing with fun at the joke. Suddenly, however,

that merry face turned pale, and its expression changed to horror, for this easily impressed and excitable child had become sensible that the eye of Ethan Brand was fixed upon him through the glass.

5 "You make the little man to be afraid, Captain," said the German Jew, turning up the dark and strong outline of his visage, from his stooping posture. "But look again, and, by chance, I shall cause you to see somewhat that is very fine, upon my word!"

10 Ethan Brand gazed into the box for an instant, and then starting back, looked fixedly at the German. What had he seen? Nothing, apparently; for a curious youth, who had peeped in almost at the same moment, beheld only a vacant space of canvas.

15 "I remember you now," muttered Ethan Brand to the showman.

"Ah, Captain," whispered the Jew of Nuremberg, with a dark smile, "I find it to be a heavy matter in my show-box,—this Unpardonable Sin! By my faith, Captain, it 20 has wearied my shoulders, this long day, to carry it over the mountain."

"Peace," answered Ethan Brand, sternly, "or get thee into the furnace yonder!"

The Jew's exhibition had scarcely concluded, when a 25 great, elderly dog—who seemed to be his own master, as no person in the company laid claim to him—saw fit to render himself the object of public notice. Hitherto, he had shown himself a very quiet, well-disposed old dog, going round from one to another, and by way of being 30 sociable, offering his rough head to be patted by any kindly hand that would take so much trouble. But now, all of a sudden, this grave and venerable quadruped of his own mere motion, and without the slightest suggestion from anybody else, began to run round after his tail, which,

to heighten the absurdity of the proceeding, was a great deal shorter than it should have been. Never was seen such headlong eagerness in pursuit of an object that could not possibly be attained; never was heard such a tremendous outbreak of growling, snarling, barking, and snapping, —as if one end of the ridiculous brute's body were at deadly and most unforgivable enmity with the other. Faster and faster, round about went the cur; and faster and still faster fled the unapproachable brevity of his tail; and louder and fiercer grew his yells of rage and animosity; until, utterly exhausted, and as far from the goal as ever, the foolish old dog ceased his performance as suddenly as he had begun it. The next moment he was as mild, quiet, sensible, and respectable in his deportment, as when he first scraped acquaintance with the company.

As may be supposed, the exhibition was greeted with universal laughter, clapping of hands, and shouts of encore, to which the canine performer responded by wagging all that there was to wag of his tail, but appeared totally unable to repeat his very successful effort to amuse the spectators.

Meanwhile, Ethan Brand had resumed his seat upon the log, and moved, it might be, by a perception of some remote analogy between his own case and that of this self-pursuing cur, he broke into the awful laugh, which, more than any other token, expressed the condition of his inward being. From that moment, the merriment of the party was at an end; they stood aghast, dreading lest the inauspicious sound should be reverberated around the horizon, and that mountain would thunder it to mountain, and so the horror be prolonged upon their ears. Then, whispering one to another that it was late,—that the moon was almost down,—that the August night was growing chill,—they hurried homewards, leaving the

lime-burner and little Joe to deal as they might with their unwelcome guest. Save for these three human beings, the open space on the hillside was a solitude, set in a vast gloom of forest. Beyond that darksome verge, the fire-  
5 light glimmered on the stately trunks and almost black foliage of pines, intermixed with the lighter verdure of sapling oaks, maples, and poplars, while here and there lay the gigantic corpses of dead trees, decaying on the leaf-strewn soil. And it seemed to little Joe—a timorous  
10 and imaginative child—that the silent forest was holding its breath, until some fearful thing should happen.

Ethan Brand thrust more wood into the fire, and closed the door of the kiln; then looking over his shoulder at the lime-burner and his son, he bade, rather than advised,  
15 them to retire to rest.

“For myself, I cannot sleep,” said he. “I have matters that it concerns me to meditate upon. I will watch the fire, as I used to do in the old time.”

“And call the Devil out of the furnace to keep you com-  
20 pany, I suppose,” muttered Bartram, who had been making intimate acquaintance with the black bottle above mentioned. “But watch, if you like, and call as many devils as you like! For my part, I shall be all the better for a snooze. Come, Joe!”

25 As the boy followed his father into the hut, he looked back at the wayfarer, and the tears came into his eyes, for his tender spirit had an intuition of the bleak and terrible loneliness in which this man had enveloped himself.

30 When they had gone, Ethan Brand sat listening to the crackling of the kindled wood, and looking at the little spirts of fire that issued through the chinks of the door. These trifles, however, once so familiar, had but the slightest hold of his attention, while deep within his mind he

was reviewing the gradual but marvellous change that had been wrought upon him by the search to which he had devoted himself. He remembered how the night dew had fallen upon him,—how the dark forest had whispered to him,—how the stars had gleamed upon him,—a simple and loving man, watching his fire in the years gone by, and ever musing as it burned. H. remembered with what tenderness, with what love and sympathy for mankind, and what pity for human guilt and woe, he had first begun to contemplate those ideas which afterwards became the inspiration of his life; with what reverence he had then looked into the heart of man, viewing it as a temple originally divine, and, however desecrated, still to be held sacred by a brother; with what awful fear he had deprecated the success of his pursuit, and prayed that the Unpardonable Sin might never be revealed to him. Then ensued that vast intellectual development, which, in its progress, disturbed the counterpoise between his mind and heart. The Idea that possessed his life had operated as a means of education; it had gone on cultivating his powers to the highest point of which they were susceptible; it had raised him from the level of an unlettered laborer to stand on a star-lit eminence, whither the philosophers of the earth, laden with the lore of universities, might vainly strive to clamber after him. So much for the intellect! But where was the heart? That, indeed, had withered,—had contracted,—had hardened,—had perished! It had ceased to partake of the universal throb. He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brother-man, opening the chambers of the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy, which gave him a right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and, at length, converting man and woman to be his

puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study.

Thus Ethan Brand became a fiend. He began to be so from the moment that his moral nature had ceased to keep  
5 the pace of improvement with his intellect. And now, as his highest effort and inevitable development,—as the bright and gorgeous flower, and rich, delicious fruit of his life's labor,—he had produced the Unpardonable Sin!

“What more have I to seek? what more to achieve?”  
10 said Ethan Brand to himself. “My task is done, and well done!”

Starting from the log with a certain alacrity in his gait and ascending the hillock of earth that was raised against the stone circumference of the lime-kiln, he thus reached  
15 the top of the structure. It was a space of perhaps ten feet across, from edge to edge, presenting a view of the upper surface of the immense mass of broken marble with which the kiln was heaped. All these innumerable blocks and fragments of marble were red-hot and vividly on fire,  
20 sending up great spouts of blue flame, which quivered aloft and danced madly, as within a magic circle, and sank and rose again, with continual and multitudinous activity. As the lonely man bent forward over this terrible body of fire, the blasting heat smote up against his person with a  
25 breath that, it might be supposed, would have scorched and shrivelled him up in a moment.

Ethan Brand stood erect, and raised his arms on high. The blue flames played upon his face, and imparted the wild and ghastly light which alone could have suited its  
30 expression; it was that of a fiend on the verge of plunging into his gulf of intensest torment.

“O Mother Earth,” cried he, “who art no more my Mother, and into whose bosom this frame shall never be resolved! O mankind, whose brotherhood I have cast off,

and trampled thy great heart beneath my feet! O stars of heaven, that shone on me of old, as if to light me onward and upward!—farewell all, and forever. Come, deadly element of Fire,—henceforth my familiar frame! Embrace me, as I do thee!”

That night the sound of a fearful peal of laughter rolled heavily through the sleep of the lime-burner and his little son; dim shapes of horror and anguish haunted their dreams, and seemed still present in the rude hovel, when they opened their eyes to the daylight.

“Up, boy, up!” cried the lime-burner, staring about him. “Thank Heaven, the night is gone, at last; and rather than pass such another, I would watch my lime-kiln, wide awake, for a twelvemonth. This Ethan Brand, with his humbug of an Unpardonable Sin, has done me no such mighty favor, in taking my place!”

He issued from the hut, followed by little Joe, who kept fast hold of his father’s hand. The early sunshine was already pouring its gold upon the mountain-tops; and though the valleys were still in shadow, they smiled cheerfully in the promise of the bright day that was hastening onward. The village, completely shut in by hills, which swelled away gently about it, looked as if it had rested peacefully in the hollow of the great hand of Providence. Every dwelling was distinctly visible; the little spires of the two churches pointed upwards, and caught a fore-glimmering of brightness from the sun-gilt skies upon their gilded weathercocks. The tavern was astir, and the figure of the old, smoke-dried stage-agent, cigar in mouth, was seen beneath the stoop. Old Graylock was glorified with a golden cloud upon his head. Scattered likewise over the breasts of the surrounding mountains, there were heaps of hoary mist, in fantastic shapes, some of them far down into the valley, others high up towards the summits, and still others,

of the same family of mist or cloud, hovering in the gold radiance of the upper atmosphere. Stepping from one to another of the clouds that rested on the hills, and thence to the loftier brotherhood that sailed in air, it seemed almost as if a mortal man might thus ascend into the heavenly regions. | Earth was so mingled with sky that it was a day-dream to look at it. |

To supply that charm of the familiar and homely, which Nature so readily adopts into a scene like this, the stage-coach was rattling down the mountain-road, and the driver sounded his horn, while echo caught up the notes, and intertwined them into a rich and varied and elaborate harmony, of which the original performer could lay claim to little share. The great hills played a concert among themselves, each contributing a strain of airy sweetness.

Little Joe's face brightened at once.

"Dear father," cried he, skipping cheerily to and fro, "that strange man is gone, and the sky and the mountains all seem glad of it!"

"Yes," growled the lime-burner, with an oath, "but he has let the fire go down, and no thanks to him if five hundred bushels of lime are not spoiled. If I catch the fellow hereabouts again, I shall feel like tossing him into the furnace!"

With his long pole in his hand, he ascended to the top of the kiln. After a moment's pause, he called to his son.

"Come up here, Joe!" said he.

So little Joe ran up the hillock, and stood by his father's side. The marble was all burnt into perfect, snow-white lime. But on its surface, in the midst of the circle,—snow-white too, and thoroughly converted into lime,—lay a human skeleton, in the attitude of a person who, after long toil, lies down to long repose. Within the ribs—strange to say—was the shape of a human heart.



"Was the fellow's heart made of marble?" cried Bartram, in some perplexity at this phenomenon. "At any rate, it is burnt into what looks like special good lime; and, taking all the bones together, my kiln is half a bushel the richer for him."

5

So saying, the rude lime-burner lifted his pole, and, letting it fall upon the skeleton, the relics of Ethan Brand were crumbled into fragments.

# THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

By E. A. POE

Son cœur est un luth suspendu;  
Sitôt qu'on le touche il résonne.

*Béranger.*

DURING the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length  
5 found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-  
10 pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain, upon the bleak walls, upon the vacant  
15 eye-like windows, upon a few rank sedges, and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveler upon opium; the bitter lapse into every-day life, the hideous dropping  
20 off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart, an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it—I paused to think—what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House

of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there *are* combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or perhaps to annihilate, its capacity for sorrowful impression; and acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled luster by the dwelling, and gazed down—but with a shudder even more thrilling than before—upon the remodeled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.

Nevertheless, in this mansion of gloom I now proposed to myself a sojourn of some weeks. Its proprietor, Roderick Usher, had been one of my boon companions in boyhood; but many years had elapsed since our last meeting. A letter, however, had lately reached me in a distant part of the country—a letter from him—which in its wildly importunate nature had admitted of no other than a personal reply. The MS. gave evidence of nervous agitation. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness, of a mental disorder which oppressed him, and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best and indeed his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady. It was the manner in which all this, and much more, was said—it was the apparent *heart* that went with his request—which allowed me no room for hesitation; and I accordingly obeyed forthwith what I still considered a very singular summons.

Although as boys we had been even intimate associates, yet I really knew little of my friend. His reserve had been always excessive and habitual. I was aware, however, that his very ancient family had been noted, time out of  
5 mind, for a peculiar sensibility of temperament, displaying itself, through long ages, in many works of exalted art, and manifested of late in repeated deeds of munificent yet unobtrusive charity, as well as in a passionate devotion to the intricacies, perhaps even more than to the orthodox  
10 and easily recognizable beauties, of musical science. I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact that the stem of the Usher race, all time-honored as it was, had put forth at no period any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had al-  
15 ways, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain. It was this deficiency, I considered, while running over in thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people, and while speculating upon the possible influence which the one,  
20 in the long lapse of centuries, might have exercised upon the other—it was this deficiency, perhaps, of collateral issue, and the consequent undeviating transmission from sire to son of the patrimony with the name, which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title  
25 of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the “House of Usher”—an appellation which seemed to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion.

I have said that the sole effect of my somewhat childish  
30 experiment, that of looking down within the tarn, had been to deepen the first singular impression. There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition—for why should I not so term it?—served mainly to accelerate the increase itself. Such, I have long

known, is the paradoxical law of all sentiments having terror as a basis. And it might have been for this reason only, that, when I again uplifted my eyes to the house itself, from its image in the pool, there grew in my mind a strange fancy—a fancy so ridiculous, indeed, that I but 5 mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me. I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity: an atmosphere which had no affinity 10 with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn: a pestilent and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued.

Shaking off from my spirit what *must* have been a dream, 15 I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart 20 from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality 25 of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a 30 barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zig-zag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

Noticing these things, I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in waiting took my horse, and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me, in silence, through many dark  
5 and intricate passages in my progress to the studio of his master. Much that I encountered on the way contributed, I know not how, to heighten the vague sentiments of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me—while the carvings of the ceilings, the somber tapestries  
10 of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy—while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this—I still won-  
15 dered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up. On one of the staircases, I met the physician of the family. His countenance, I thought, wore a mingled expression of low cunning and perplexity. He accosted me with trepidation and passed  
20 on. The valet now threw open a door and ushered me into the presence of his master.

The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be  
25 altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the  
30 recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmos-

phere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

Upon my entrance, Usher arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with a vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality—of the constrained effort of the *ennuyé* man of the world. A glance, however, at his countenance, convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down, and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my early boyhood. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten. And now in the mere exaggeration of the prevailing character of these features, and of the expression they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke. The now ghastly pallor of the skin, and the now miraculous luster of the eye, above all things startled and even awed me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity.

In the manner of my friend I was at once struck with an incoherence, an inconsistency; and I soon found this to arise from a series of feeble and futile struggles to overcome an habitual trepidancy, an excessive nervous agitation. For something of this nature I had indeed been prepared, no less by his letter than by reminiscences of certain boyish traits, and by conclusions deduced from his peculiar physical conformation and temperament. His action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous indecision (when the animal spirits seemed utterly in abeyance) to that species of energetic concision—that abrupt, weighty, unhurried, and hollow-sounding enunciation—that leaden, self-balanced and perfectly modulated guttural utterance—which may be observed in the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium, during the periods of his most intense excitement.

It was thus that he spoke of the object of my visit, of his earnest desire to see me, and of the solace he expected me to afford him. He entered, at some length, into what he conceived to be the nature of his malady. It was, he said, a constitutional and a family evil, and one for which he despaired to find a remedy—a mere nervous affection, he immediately added, which would undoubtedly soon pass off. It displayed itself in a host of unnatural sensations. Some of these, as he detailed them, interested and bewildered me; although, perhaps, the terms and the general manner of the narration had their weight. He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses; the most insipid food was alone endurable; he could wear only garments of certain texture; the odors of all flowers were oppressive; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror.



To an anomalous species of terror I found him a bounden slave. "I shall perish," said he, "I *must* perish in this deplorable folly. Thus, thus, and not otherwise, shall I be lost. I dread the events of the future, not in themselves, but in their results. I shudder at the thought of any, 5 even the most trivial, incident, which may operate upon this intolerable agitation of soul. I have, indeed, no abhorrence of danger, except in its absolute effect—in terror. In this unnerved—in this pitiable condition, I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon 10 life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, FEAR."

I learned moreover at intervals, and through broken and equivocal hints, another singular feature of his mental condition. He was enchained by certain superstitious 15 impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenanted, and whence, for many years, he had never ventured forth—in regard to an influence whose supposititious force was conveyed in terms too shadowy here to be restated—an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and 20 substance of his family mansion, had, by dint of long sufferance, he said, obtained over his spirit—an effect which the physique of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked down, had, at length, brought about upon the morale of his existence. 25

He admitted, however, although with hesitation, that much of the peculiar gloom which thus afflicted him could be traced to a more natural and far more palpable origin—to the severe and long-continued illness, indeed to the evidently approaching dissolution, of a tenderly beloved 30 sister—his sole companion for long years, his last and only relative on earth. "Her decease," he said, with a bitterness which I can never forget, "would leave him (him the hopeless and the frail) the last of the ancient

race of the Ushers." While he spoke, the lady Madeline (for so was she called) passed slowly through a remote portion of the apartment, and, without having noticed my presence, disappeared. I regarded her with an utter  
5 astonishment not unmingled with dread, and yet I found it impossible to account for such feelings. A sensation of stupor oppressed me, as my eyes followed her retreating steps. When a door, at length, closed upon her, my glance sought instinctively and eagerly the countenance of the  
10 brother; but he had buried his face in his hands, and I could only perceive that a far more than ordinary wanness had overspread the emaciated fingers through which trickled many passionate tears.

The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the  
15 skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character, were the unusual diagnosis. Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady, and had not betaken  
20 herself finally to bed; but, on the closing in of the evening of my arrival at the house, she succumbed (as her brother told me at night with inexpressible agitation) to the prostrating power of the destroyer; and I learned that the glimpse I had obtained of her person would thus probably  
25 be the last I should obtain—that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more.

For several days ensuing, her name was unmentioned by either Usher or myself; and during this period I was  
30 busied in earnest endeavors to alleviate the melancholy of my friend. We painted and read together; or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisation of his speaking guitar. And thus, as a closer and still closer intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all

•

attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe, in one unceasing radiation of gloom.

I shall ever bear about me a memory of the many solemn 5  
hours I thus spent alone with the master of the House of Usher. Yet I should fail in any attempt to convey an idea of the exact character of the studies, or of the occupations, in which he involved me, or led me the way. An excited and highly distempered ideality threw a sulphur- 10  
ous luster over all. His long improvised dirges will ring forever in my ears. Among other things, I hold painfully in mind a certain singular perversion and amplification of the wild air of the last waltz of Von Weber. From the paintings over which his elaborate fancy brooded, and 15  
which grew, touch by touch, into vaguenesses at which I shuddered the more thrillingly because I shuddered knowing not why;—from these paintings (vivid as their images now are before me) I would in vain endeavor to educe more than a small portion which should lie within the 20  
compass of merely written words. By the utter simplicity, by the nakedness of his designs, he arrested and overawed attention. If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal was Roderick Usher. For me at least, in the circumstances then surrounding me, there arose, out of the pure abstrac- 25  
tions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvas, an intensity of intolerable awe, no shadow of which felt I ever yet in the contemplation of the certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli.

One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, 30  
partaking not so rigidly of the spirit of abstraction, may be shadowed forth, although feebly, in words. A small picture presented the interior of an immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls, smooth, white,

and without interruption or device. Certain accessory points of the design served well to convey the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth. No outlet was observed in any portion of its vast extent, and no torch or other artificial source of light was discernible; yet a flood of intense rays rolled throughout, and bathed the whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendor.

I have just spoken of that morbid condition of the auditory nerve which rendered all music intolerable to the sufferer, with the exception of certain effects of stringed instruments. It was, perhaps, the narrow limits to which he thus confined himself upon the guitar, which gave birth, in great measure, to the fantastic character of his performances. But the fervid *facility* of his impromptus could not be so accounted for. They must have been, and were, in the notes, as well as in the words of his wild fantasies (for he not unfrequently accompanied himself with rhymed verbal improvisations), the result of that intense mental collectedness and concentration to which I have previously alluded as observable only in particular moments of the highest artificial excitement. The words of one of these rhapsodies I have easily remembered. I was, perhaps, the more forcibly impressed with it, as he gave it, because, in the under or mystic current of its meaning, I fancied that I perceived, and for the first time, a full consciousness, on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne. The verses, which were entitled "The Haunted Palace," ran very nearly, if not accurately, thus:—

## I

In the greenest of our valleys  
By good angels tenanted,  
Once a fair and stately palace—  
Radiant palace—reared its head.

In the monarch Thought's dominion,  
 It stood there;  
 Never seraph spread a pinion  
 Over fabric half so fair.

II

Banners yellow, glorious, golden, 5  
 On its roof did float and flow,  
 (This—all this—was in the olden  
 Time long ago)  
 And every gentle air that dallied,  
 In that sweet day, 10  
 Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,  
 A wingéd odor went away.

III

Wanderers in that happy valley  
 Through two luminous windows saw  
 Spirits moving musically 15  
 To a lute's well-tuned law,  
 Round about a throne where, sitting,  
 Porphyrogene,  
 In state his glory well befitting,  
 The ruler of the realm was seen. 20

IV

And all with pearl and ruby glowing  
 Was the fair palace door,  
 Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,  
 And sparkling evermore,  
 A troop of Echoes whose sweet duty 25  
 Was but to sing,  
 In voices of surpassing beauty,  
 The wit and wisdom of their king.

V

But evil things, in robes of sorrow  
 Assailed the monarch's high estate; 30  
 (Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow  
 Shall dawn upon him, desolate!)  
 And round about his home the glory  
 That blushed and bloomed  
 Is but a dim-remembered story 35  
 Of the old time entombed.

## VI

And travelers now within that valley  
 Through the red-litten windows see  
 Vast forms that move fantastically  
 To a discordant melody;  
 5 While, like a ghastly rapid river,  
 Through the pale door  
 A hideous throng rush out forever,  
 And laugh—but smile no more.

I well remember that suggestions arising from this bal-  
 10 lad led us into a train of thought, wherein there became  
 manifest an opinion of Usher's which I mention not so  
 much on account of its novelty, (for other men <sup>1</sup> have  
 thought thus,) as on account of the pertinacity with which  
 he maintained it. This opinion, in its general form, was  
 15 that of the sentience of all vegetable things. But in his  
 disordered fancy the idea had assumed a more daring  
 character, and trespassed, under certain conditions, upon  
 the kingdom of inorganization. I lack words to express  
 the full extent, or the earnest *abandon* of his persuasion.  
 20 The belief, however, was connected (as I have previously  
 hinted) with the gray stones of the home of his forefathers.  
 The conditions of the sentience had been here, he imag-  
 ined, fulfilled in the method of collocation of these stones  
 —in the order of their arrangement, as well as in that of  
 25 the many fungi which overspread them, and of the de-  
 cayed trees which stood around—above all, in the long  
 undisturbed endurance of this arrangement, and in its  
 reduplication in the still waters of the tarn. Its evidence—  
 the evidence of the sentience—was to be seen, he said (and  
 30 I here started as he spoke), in the gradual yet certain con-  
 densation of an atmosphere of their own about the waters  
 and the walls. The result was discoverable, he added,

<sup>1</sup> Watson, Dr. Percival, Spallanzani, and especially the Bishop of  
 Landaff.—See "Chemical Essays," Vol. V.

in that silent, yet importunate and terrible influence which for centuries had moulded the destinies of his family, and which made *him* what I now saw him—what he was. Such opinions need no comment, and I will make none.

Our books—the books which, for years, had formed no small portion of the mental existence of the invalid—were, as might be supposed, in strict keeping with this character of phantasm. We pored together over such works as the Ververt and Chartreuse of Gresset; the Belphegor of Machiavelli; the Heaven and Hell of Swedenborg; the Subterranean Voyage of Nicholas Klimm by Holberg; the Chiromancy of Robert Flud, of Jean D'Indaginé, and of De la Chambre; the Journey into the Blue Distance of Tieck; and the City of the Sun of Campanella. One favorite volume was a small octavo edition of the *Directorium Inquisitorum*, by the Dominican Eymeric de Gironne; and there were passages in Pomponius Mela, about the old African Satyrs and Ægipans, over which Usher would sit dreaming for hours. His chief delight, however, was found in the perusal of an exceedingly rare and curious book in quarto Gothic—the manual of a forgotten church—the *Vigiliæ Mortuorum secundum Chorum Ecclesiæ Maguntinæ*.

I could not help thinking of the wild ritual of this work, and of its probable influence upon the hypochondriac, when one evening, having informed me abruptly that the lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse for a fortnight, (previously to its final interment,) in one of the numerous vaults within the main walls of the building. The worldly reason, however, assigned for this singular proceeding, was one which I did not feel at liberty to dispute. The brother had been led to his resolution (so he told me) by consideration of the unusual character of the malady of the deceased, of certain

obtrusive and eager inquiries on the part of her medical men, and of the remote and exposed situation of the burial-ground of the family. I will not deny that when I called to mind the sinister countenance of the person whom I met  
5 upon the staircase, on the day of my arrival at the house, I had no desire to oppose what I regarded as at best but a harmless, and by no means an unnatural, precaution.

At the request of Usher, I personally aided him in the arrangements for the temporary entombment. The body  
10 having been encoffined, we two alone bore it to its rest. The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that our torches, half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means  
15 of admission for light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment. It had been used, apparently, in remote feudal times, for the worst purposes of a donjon-keep, and in later days as a place of deposit for powder, or some  
20 other highly combustible substance, as a portion of its floor, and the whole interior of a long archway through which we reached it, were carefully sheathed with copper. The door, of massive iron, had been, also, similarly protected. Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp  
25 grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges.

Having deposited our mournful burden upon tressels within this region of horror, we partially turned aside the yet unscrewed lid of the coffin, and looked upon the face of the tenant. A striking similitude between the brother  
30 and sister now first arrested my attention; and Usher, divining, perhaps, my thoughts, murmured out some few words from which I learned that the deceased and himself had been twins, and that sympathies of a scarcely intelligible nature had always existed between them. Our



glances, however, rested not long upon the dead—for we could not regard her unawed. The disease which had thus entombed the lady in the maturity of youth, had left, as usual in all maladies of a strictly cataleptical character, the mockery of a faint blush upon the bosom and the face, 5 and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip which is so terrible in death. We replaced and screwed down the lid, and, having secured the door of iron, made our way, with toil, into the scarcely less gloomy apartments of the upper portion of the house. 10

And now, some days of bitter grief having elapsed, an observable change came over the features of the mental disorder of my friend. His ordinary manner had vanished. His ordinary occupations were neglected or forgotten. He 15 roamed from chamber to chamber with hurried, unequal, and objectless step. The pallor of his countenance had assumed, if possible, a more ghastly hue—but the luminousness of his eye had utterly gone out. The once occasional huskiness of his tone was heard no more; and a tremulous quaver, as if of extreme terror, habitually characterized 20 his utterance. There were times, indeed, when I thought his unceasingly agitated mind was laboring with some oppressive secret, to divulge which he struggled for the necessary courage. At times, again, I was obliged to resolve all into the mere inexplicable vagaries of madness, for I 25 beheld him gazing upon vacancy for long hours, in an attitude of the profoundest attention, as if listening to some imaginary sound. It was no wonder that his condition terrified—that it infected me. I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influences of his 30 own fantastic yet impressive superstitions.

It was, especially, upon retiring to bed late in the night of the seventh or eighth day after the placing of the lady Madeline within the donjon, that I experienced the full

power of such feelings. Sleep came not near my couch, while the hours waned and waned away. I struggled to reason off the nervousness which had dominion over me. I endeavored to believe that much, if not all, of what I felt  
5 was due to the bewildering influence of the gloomy furniture of the room—of the dark and tattered draperies which, tortured into motion by the breath of a rising tempest, swayed fitfully to and fro upon the walls, and rustled uneasily about the decorations of the bed. But my efforts  
10 were fruitless. An irrepressible tremor gradually pervaded my frame; and at length there sat upon my very heart an incubus of utterly causeless alarm. Shaking this off with a gasp and a struggle, I uplifted myself upon the pillows, and, peering earnestly within the intense darkness of the  
15 chamber, hearkened—I know not why, except that an instinctive spirit prompted me—to certain low and indefinite sounds which came, through the pauses of the storm, at long intervals, I knew not whence. Overpowered by an intense sentiment of horror, unaccountable yet unendurable,  
20 I threw on my clothes with haste, (for I felt that I should sleep no more during the night,) and endeavored to arouse myself from the pitiable condition into which I had fallen, by pacing rapidly to and fro through the apartment.

25 I had taken but few turns in this manner, when a light step on an adjoining staircase arrested my attention. I presently recognized it as that of Usher. In an instant afterward he rapped with a gentle touch at my door, and entered, bearing a lamp. His countenance was, as usual,  
30 cadaverously wan—but, moreover, there was a species of mad hilarity in his eyes—an evidently restrained hysteria in his whole demeanor. His air appalled me—but anything was preferable to the solitude which I had so long endured, and I even welcomed his presence as a relief.

"And you have not seen it?" he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence—"you have not then seen it?—but, stay! you shall." Thus speaking, and having carefully shaded his lamp, he hurried to one of the casements, and threw it freely open to the storm. 5

The impetuous fury of the entering gust nearly lifted us from our feet. It was, indeed, a tempestuous yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty. A whirlwind had apparently collected its force in our vicinity; for there were frequent and violent alterations in the direction of the wind; and the exceeding density of the clouds (which hung so low as to press upon the turrets of the house) did not prevent our perceiving the life-like velocity with which they flew careering from all points against each other, without passing away into the distance. I say that even their exceeding density did not prevent our perceiving this; yet we had no glimpse of the moon or stars, nor was there any flashing forth of the lightning. But the under surfaces of the huge masses of agitated vapor, as well as all terrestrial objects immediately around us, were glowing in the unnatural light of a faintly luminous and distinctly visible gaseous exhalation which hung about and enshrouded the mansion. 10 15 20 25

"You must not—you shall not behold this!" said I, shudderingly, to Usher, as I led him with a gentle violence from the window to a seat. "These appearances, which bewilder you, are merely electrical phenomena not uncommon—or it may be that they have their ghastly origin in the rank miasma of the tarn. Let us close this casement; the air is chilling and dangerous to your frame. Here is one of your favorite romances. I will read, and you shall listen;—and so we will pass away this terrible night together." 30

The antique volume which I had taken up was the "Mad Trist" of Sir Launcelot Canning; but I had called it a favorite of Usher's more in sad jest than in earnest; for, in truth, there is little in its uncouth and unimaginative prolixity which could have had interest for the lofty and spiritual ideality of my friend. It was, however, the only book immediately at hand; and I indulged a vague hope that the excitement which now agitated the hypochondriac might find relief (for the history of mental disorder is full of similar anomalies) even in the extremeness of the folly which I should read. Could I have judged, indeed, by the wild overstrained air of vivacity with which he hearkened, or apparently hearkened, to the words of the tale, I might well have congratulated myself upon the success of my design.

I had arrived at that well-known portion of the story where Ethelred, the hero of the Trist, having sought in vain for peaceable admission into the dwelling of the hermit, proceeds to make good an entrance by force. Here, it will be remembered, the words of the narrative run thus:—

"And Ethelred, who was by nature of a doughty heart, and who was now mighty withal, on account of the powerfulness of the wine which he had drunken, waited no longer to hold parley with the hermit, who, in sooth, was of an obstinate and malicious turn, but, feeling the rain upon his shoulders, and fearing the rising of the tempest, uplifted his mace outright, and with blows made quickly room in the plankings of the door for his gauntleted hand; and now pulling therewith sturdily, he so cracked, and ripped, and tore all asunder, that the noise of the dry and hollow-sounding wood alarumed and reverberated throughout the forest."

At the termination of this sentence I started, and for a moment paused; for it appeared to me (although I at

once concluded that my excited fancy had deceived me)—it appeared to me that from some very remote portion of the mansion there came, indistinctly, to my ears, what might have been, in its exact similarity of character, the echo (but a stifled and dull one certainly) of the very crack- 5  
ing and ripping sound which Sir Launcelot had so particularly described. It was, beyond doubt, the coincidence alone which had arrested my attention; for, amid the rattling of the sashes of the casements, and the ordinary commingled noises of the still increasing storm, the sound, 10  
in itself, had nothing, surely, which should have interested or disturbed me. I continued the story:—

“But the good champion Ethelred, now entering within the door, was sore enraged and amazed to perceive no signal of the malicious hermit; but, in the stead thereof, a dragon of a scaly 15  
and prodigious demeanor, and of a fiery tongue, which sate in guard before a palace of gold, with a floor of silver; and upon the wall there hung a shield of shining brass with this legend enwritten—

Who entereth herein, a conqueror hath bin;  
Who slayeth the dragon, the shield he shall win. 20

And Ethelred uplifted his mace, and struck upon the head of the dragon, which fell before him, and gave up his pesty breath, with a shriek so horrid and harsh, and withal so piercing, that Ethelred had fain to close his ears with his hands against the 25  
dreadful noise of it, the like whereof was never before heard.”

Here again I paused abruptly, and now with a feeling of wild amazement; for there could be no doubt whatever that, in this instance, I did actually hear (although from what direction it proceeded I found it impossible to say) 30  
a low and apparently distant, but harsh, protracted, and most unusual screaming or grating sound—the exact counterpart of what my fancy had already conjured up for

the dragon's unnatural shriek as described by the romancer.

Oppressed, as I certainly was, upon the occurrence of this second and most extraordinary coincidence, by a  
5 thousand conflicting sensations, in which wonder and extreme terror were predominant, I still retained sufficient presence of mind to avoid exciting, by any observation, the sensitive nervousness of my companion. I was by no means certain that he had noticed the sounds in question;  
10 although, assuredly, a strange alteration had during the last few minutes taken place in his demeanor. From a position fronting my own, he had gradually brought round his chair, so as to sit with his face to the door of the chamber; and thus I could but partially perceive his features,  
15 although I saw that his lips trembled as if he were murmuring inaudibly. His head had dropped upon his breast—yet I knew that he was not asleep, from the wide and rigid opening of the eye as I caught a glance of it in profile. The motion of his body, too, was at variance with this idea—  
20 for he rocked from side to side with a gentle yet constant and uniform sway. Having rapidly taken notice of all this, I resumed the narrative of Sir Launcelot, which thus proceeded:—

“And now, the champion, having escaped from the terrible  
25 fury of the dragon, bethinking himself of the brazen shield, and of the breaking up of the enchantment which was upon it, removed the carcass from out of the way before him, and approached valorously over the silver pavement of the castle to where the shield was upon the wall; which in sooth tarried not  
30 for his full coming, but fell down at his feet upon the silver floor, with a mighty great and terrible ringing sound.”

No sooner had these syllables passed my lips, than—as if a shield of brass had indeed, at the moment, fallen heav-

ily upon a floor of silver—I became aware of a distinct, hollow, metallic and clangorous, yet apparently muffled reverberation. Completely unnerved, I leaped to my feet; but the measured rocking movement of Usher was undisturbed. I rushed to the chair in which he sat. His eyes were bent 5 fixedly before him, and throughout his whole countenance there reigned a stony rigidity. But, as I placed my hand upon his shoulder, there came a strong shudder over his whole person; a sickly smile quivered about his lips; and I saw that he spoke in a low, hurried, and gibbering murmur, as if unconscious of my presence. Bending closely 10 over him, I at length drank in the hideous import of his words.

“Not hear it?—yes, I hear it, and *have* heard it. Long—long—long—many minutes, many hours, many days, 15 have I heard it—yet I dared not—oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am!—I dared not—I *dared* not speak! *We have put her living in the tomb!* Said I not that my senses were acute? I *now* tell you that I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them— 20 many, many days ago—yet I dared not—I *dared not speak!* And now—to-night—Ethelred—ha! ha!—the breaking of the hermit’s door, and the death-cry of the dragon, and the clangor of the shield!—say, rather, the rending of her coffin, and the grating of the iron hinges of her prison, and 25 her struggles within the coppered archway of the vault! Oh, whither shall I fly? Will she not be here anon? Is she not hurrying to upbraid me for my haste? Have I not heard her footstep on the stair? Do I not distinguish that heavy and horrible beating of her heart? Madman!”— 30 here he sprang furiously to his feet, and shrieked out his syllables, as if in the effort he were giving up his soul—“*Madman! I tell you that she now stands without the door!*”

As if in the superhuman energy of his utterance there

had been found the potency of a spell, the huge antique panels to which the speaker pointed threw slowly back, upon the instant, their ponderous and ebony jaws. It was the work of the rushing gust—but then without those  
5 doors there *did* stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame. For a moment she remained trembling and reeling to and fro upon the thresh-  
10 old—then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and, in her violent and now final death-agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated.

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled  
15 aghast. The storm was still abroad in all its wrath as I found myself crossing the old causeway. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued; for the vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was  
20 that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon, which now shone vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure, of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened—there came a fierce  
25 breath of the whirlwind—the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight—my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder—there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters—and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed  
30 sullenly and silently over the fragments of the "*House of Usher*."



# THE GOLD-BUG

By EDGAR ALLAN POE

What ho! what ho! this fellow is dancing mad!  
He hath been bitten by the Tarantula.

*All in the Wrong.*

MANY years ago, I contracted an intimacy with a Mr. William Legrand. He was of an ancient Huguenot family, and had once been wealthy; but a series of misfortunes had reduced him to want. To avoid the mortification consequent upon his disasters, he left New Orleans, the city of his forefathers, and took up his residence at Sullivan's Island, near Charleston, South Carolina.

This island is a very singular one. It consists of little else than the sea sand, and is about three miles long. Its breadth at no point exceeds a quarter of a mile. It is separated from the main-land by a scarcely perceptible creek, oozing its way through a wilderness of reeds and slime, a favorite resort of the marsh-hen. The vegetation, as might be supposed, is scant, or at least dwarfish. No trees of any magnitude are to be seen. Near the western extremity, where Fort Moultrie stands, and where are some miserable frame buildings, tenanted during summer by the fugitives from Charleston dust and fever, may be found, indeed, the bristly palmetto; but the whole island, with the exception of this western point, and a line of hard white beach on the seacoast, is covered with a dense undergrowth of the sweet myrtle, so much prized by the horticulturists of England. The shrub here often attains the height of fifteen or twenty feet, and forms an almost impenetrable coppice, burdening the air with its fragrance.

In the utmost recesses of this coppice, not far from the eastern or more remote end of the island, Legrand had built himself a small hut, which he occupied when I first, by mere accident, made his acquaintance. This soon  
5 ripened into friendship—for there was much in the recluse to excite interest and esteem. I found him well educated, with unusual powers of mind, but infected with misanthropy, and subject to perverse moods of alternate enthusiasm and melancholy. He had with him many books,  
10 but rarely employed them. His chief amusements were gunning and fishing, or sauntering along the beach and through the myrtles, in quest of shells or entomological specimens;—his collection of the latter might have been envied by a Swammerdamm. In these excursions he was  
15 usually accompanied by an old negro, called Jupiter, who had been manumitted before the reverses of the family, but who could be induced, neither by threats nor by promises, to abandon what he considered his right of attendance upon the footsteps of his young “Massa Will.”  
20 It is not improbable that the relatives of Legrand, conceiving him to be somewhat unsettled in intellect, had contrived to instil this obstinacy into Jupiter, with a view to the supervision and guardianship of the wanderer.

The winters in the latitude of Sullivan’s Island are  
25 seldom very severe, and in the fall of the year it is a rare event indeed when a fire is considered necessary. About the middle of October, 18—, there occurred, however, a day of remarkable chilliness. Just before sunset I scrambled my way through the evergreens to the hut of my  
30 friend, whom I had not visited for several weeks—my residence being at that time in Charleston, a distance of nine miles from the island, while the facilities of passage and re-passage were very far behind those of the present day. Upon reaching the hut I rapped, as was my custom,

and, getting no reply, sought for the key where I knew it was secreted, unlocked the door and went in. A fine fire was blazing upon the hearth. It was a novelty, and by no means an ungrateful one. I threw off an overcoat, took an armchair by the crackling logs, and awaited patiently 5 the arrival of my hosts.

Soon after dark they arrived, and gave me a most cordial welcome. Jupiter, grinning from ear to ear, bustled about to prepare some marsh-hens for supper. Legrand was in one of his fits—how else shall I term them?—of 10 enthusiasm. He had found an unknown bivalve, forming a new genus, and, more than this, he had hunted down and secured, with Jupiter's assistance, a *scarabæus* which he believed to be totally new, but in respect to which he wished to have my opinion on the morrow. 15

"And why not to-night?" I asked, rubbing my hands over the blaze, and wishing the whole tribe of *scarabæi* at the devil.

"Ah, if I had only known you were here!" said Legrand, "but it's so long since I saw you; and how could I foresee 20 that you would pay me a visit this very night of all others? As I was coming home I met Lieutenant G——, from the fort, and, very foolishly, I lent him the bug; so it will be impossible for you to see it until the morning. Stay here to-night, and I will send Jup down for it at sunrise. It is 25 the loveliest thing in creation!"

"What?—sunrise?"

"Nonsense! no!—the bug. It is of a brilliant gold color—about the size of a large hickory-nut—with two jet black spots near one extremity of the back, and 30 another, somewhat longer, at the other. The *antennæ* are——"

"Dey ain't *no* tin in him, Massa Will, I keep a tellin on you," here interrupted Jupiter; "de bug is a goole-bug,

solid, ebery bit of him, inside and all, sep him wing—neber feel half so hebby a bug in my life.”

“Well, suppose it is, Jup,” replied Legrand, somewhat more earnestly, it seemed to me, than the case demanded,  
5 “is that any reason for your letting the birds burn? The color”—here he turned to me—“is really almost enough to warrant Jupiter’s idea. You never saw a more brilliant metallic luster than the scales emit—but of this you cannot judge till to-morrow. In the mean time I can give you  
10 some idea of the shape.” Saying this, he seated himself at a small table, on which were a pen and ink, but no paper. He looked for some in a drawer, but found none.

“Never mind,” said he at length, “this will answer;” and he drew from his waistcoat pocket a scrap of what I  
15 took to be very dirty foolscap, and made upon it a rough drawing with the pen. While he did this, I retained my seat by the fire, for I was still chilly. When the design was complete, he handed it to me without rising. As I received it, a low growl was heard, succeeded by a scratching  
20 at the door. Jupiter opened it, and a large Newfoundland, belonging to Legrand, rushed in, leaped upon my shoulders, and loaded me with caresses; for I had shown him much attention during previous visits. When his gambols were over, I looked at the paper, and, to speak the truth, found  
25 myself not a little puzzled at what my friend had depicted.

“Well!” I said, after contemplating it for some minutes, this *is* a strange *scarabæus*, I must confess; new to me: never saw anything like it before—unless it was a skull, or  
30 a death’s-head, which it more nearly resembles than anything else that has come under *my* observation.”

“A death’s-head!” echoed Legrand—“Oh—yes—well, it has something of that appearance upon paper, no doubt. The two upper black spots look like eyes, eh? and the

longer one at the bottom like a mouth—and then the shape of the whole is oval.”

“Perhaps so,” said I; “but, Legrand, I fear you are no artist. I must wait until I see the beetle itself, if I am to form any idea of its personal appearance.” 5

“Well, I don’t know,” said he, a little nettled, “I draw tolerably—*should* do it at least—have had good masters, and flatter myself that I am not quite a blockhead.”

“But, my dear fellow, you are joking then,” said I, “this is a very passable *skull*,—indeed, I may say that it is a 10 very *excellent* skull, according to the vulgar notions about such specimens of physiology—and your *scarabæus* must be the queerest *scarabæus* in the world if it resembles it. Why, we may get up a very thrilling bit of superstition upon this hint. I presume you will call the bug *scarabæus* 15 *caput hominis*, or something of that kind—there are many similar titles in the Natural Histories. But where are the *antennæ* you spoke of?”

“The *antennæ*!” said Legrand, who seemed to be getting unaccountably warm upon the subject; “I am sure you 20 must see the *antennæ*. I made them as distinct as they are in the original insect, and I presume that is sufficient.”

“Well, well,” I said, “perhaps you have—still I don’t see them;” and I handed him the paper without additional remark, not wishing to ruffle his temper; but I was much 25 surprised at the turn affairs had taken; his ill humor puzzled me—and, as for the drawing of the beetle, there were positively *no antennæ* visible, and the whole *did* bear a very close resemblance to the ordinary cuts of a death’s-head. 30

He received the paper very peevishly, and was about to crumple it, apparently to throw it in the fire, when a casual glance at the design seemed suddenly to rivet his attention. In an instant his face grew violently red—in another as

excessively pale. For some minutes he continued to scrutinize the drawing minutely where he sat. At length he arose, took a candle from the table, and proceeded to seat himself upon a sea-chest in the farthest corner of the  
5 room. Here again he made an anxious examination of the paper; turning it in all directions. He said nothing, however, and his conduct greatly astonished me; yet I thought it prudent not to exacerbate the growing moodiness of his temper by any comment. Presently he took  
10 from his coat pocket a wallet, placed the paper carefully in it, and deposited both in a writing-desk, which he locked. He now grew more composed in his demeanor; but his original air of enthusiasm had quite disappeared. Yet he seemed not so much sulky as abstracted. As the evening  
15 wore away he became more and more absorbed in reverie, from which no sallies of mine could arouse him. It had been my intention to pass the night at the hut, as I had frequently done before, but, seeing my host in this mood, I deemed it proper to take leave. He did not press me to  
20 remain, but, as I departed, he shook my hand with even more than his usual cordiality.

It was about a month after this (and during the interval I had seen nothing of Legrand) when I received a visit, at Charleston, from his man, Jupiter. I had never seen the  
25 good old negro look so dispirited, and I feared that some serious disaster had befallen my friend.

"Well, Jup," said I, "what is the matter now?—how is your master?"

"Why, to speak de troof, massa, him not so berry well  
30 as mought be."

"Not well! I am truly sorry to hear it. What does he complain of?"

"Dar! dat's it!—him neber plain of notin—but him berry sick for all dat."

"Very sick, Jupiter!—why didn't you say so at once? Is he confined to bed?"

"No, dat he aint!—he aint find nowhar—dat's just whar de shoe pinch—my mind is got to be berry hebbly bout poor Massa Will."

"Jupiter, I should like to understand what it is you are talking about. You say your master is sick. Hasn't he told you what ails him?"

"Why, massa, taint worf while for to git mad bout de matter—Massa Will say noffin at all aint de matter wid him—but den what make him go about looking dis here way, wid he head down and he soldiers up, and as white as a gose? And den he keep a syphon all de time——"

"Keeps a what, Jupiter?"

"Keeps a syphon wid de figgurs on de slate—de queerest figgurs I ebber did see. Ise gittin to be skeered, I tell you. Hab for to keep mighty tight eye pon him noovers. Todder day he gib me slip fore de sun up and was gone de whole ob de blessed day. I had a big stick ready cut for to gib him d——d good beating when he did come—but Ise sich a fool dat I hadn't de heart arter all—he look so berry poorly."

"Eh?—what?—ah yes!—upon the whole I think you had better not be too severe with the poor fellow—don't flog him, Jupiter—he can't very well stand it—but can you form no idea of what has occasioned this illness, or rather this change of conduct? Has anything unpleasant happened since I saw you?"

"No, massa, dey aint bin noffin onpleasant *since* den—'twas *fore* den I'm feared—'twas de berry day you was dare."

"How? what do you mean?"

"Why, massa, I mean de bug—dare now."

"The what?"

"De bug—I'm berry sartain dat Massa Will bin bit somewhere bout de head by dat goole-bug."

"And what cause have you, Jupiter, for such a supposition?"

5 "Claws enuff, massa, and mouff too. I nebber did see sich a d——d bug—he kick and he bite ebery ting what cum near him. Massa Will cotch him fuss, but had for to let him go gin mighty quick, I tell you—den was de time he must ha got de bite. I didn't like de look ob de bug  
10 mouff, myself, no how, so I wouldn't take hold ob him wid my finger, but I cotch him wid a piece ob paper dat I found. I rap him up in de paper and stuff piece ob it in he mouff—dat was de way."

"And you think, then, that your master was really  
15 bitten by the beetle, and that the bite made him sick?"

"I don't tink noffin about it—I nose it. What make him dream bout de goole so much, if taint cause he bit by de goole-bug? Ise heerd bout dem goole-bugs fore dis."

"But how do you know he dreams about gold?"

20 "How I know? why cause he talk about it in he sleep—dat's how I nose."

"Well, Jup, perhaps you are right; but to what fortunate circumstance am I to attribute the honor of a visit from you to-day?"

25 "What de matter, massa?"

"Did you bring any message from Mr. Legrand?"

"No, massa, I bring dis here pissel;" and here Jupiter handed me a note which ran thus:

"MY DEAR —, Why have I not seen you for so long a  
30 time? I hope you have not been so foolish as to take offence at any little *brusquerie* of mine; but no, that is improbable.

"Since I saw you I have had great cause for anxiety. I have something to tell you, yet scarcely know how to tell it, or whether I should tell it at all.



"I have not been quite well for some days past, and poor old Jup annoys me, almost beyond endurance, by his well-meant attentions. Would you believe it?—he had prepared a huge stick, the other day, with which to chastise me for giving him the slip, and spending the day, *solus*, among the hills on the mainland. I verily believe that my ill looks alone saved me a flogging. 5

"I have made no addition to my cabinet since we met.

"If you can, in any way, make it convenient, come over with Jupiter. *Do* come. I wish to see you *to-night*, upon business of importance. I assure you that it is of the *highest* importance. 10

"Ever yours,

"WILLIAM LEGRAND."

There was something in the tone of this note which gave me great uneasiness. Its whole style differed materially from that of Legrand. What could he be dreaming of? What new crotchet possessed his excitable brain? What "business of the highest importance" could *he* possibly have to transact? Jupiter's account of him boded no good. I dreaded lest the continued pressure of misfortune had, at length, fairly unsettled the reason of my friend. Without a moment's hesitation, therefore, I prepared to accompany the negro. 15

Upon reaching the wharf, I noticed a scythe and three spades, all apparently new, lying in the bottom of the boat in which we were to embark. 25

"What is the meaning of all this, Jup?" I inquired.

"Him syfe, massa, and spade."

"Very true; but what are they doing here?"

"Him de syfe and de spade what Massa Will sis pon my buying for him in de town, and de debbil's own lot of money I had to gib for em." 30

"But what, in the name of all that is mysterious, is your 'Massa Will' going to do with scythes and spades?"

"Dat's more dan *I* know, and debbil take me if I don't believe 'tis more dan he know, too. But it's all cum ob de bug."

Finding that no satisfaction was to be obtained of  
5 Jupiter, whose whole intellect seemed to be absorbed by  
"de bug," I now stepped into the boat and made sail.  
With a fair and strong breeze we soon ran into the little  
cove to the northward of Fort Moultrie, and a walk of  
some two miles brought us to the hut. It was about three  
10 in the afternoon when we arrived. Legrand had been  
awaiting us in eager expectation. He grasped my hand  
with a nervous *empressement*, which alarmed me and  
strengthened the suspicions already entertained. His  
countenance was pale, even to ghastliness, and his deep-set  
15 eyes glared with unnatural luster. After some inquiries  
respecting his health, I asked him, not knowing what better  
to say, if he had yet obtained the *scarabæus* from Lieutenant  
G——.

"Oh, yes," he replied, coloring violently, "I got it from  
20 him the next morning. Nothing should tempt me to part  
with that *scarabæus*. Do you know that Jupiter is quite  
right about it?"

"In what way?" I asked, with a sad foreboding at heart.

"In supposing it to be a bug of *real gold*." He said this  
25 with an air of profound seriousness, and I felt inexpressibly  
shocked.

"This bug is to make my fortune," he continued, with a  
triumphant smile, "to reinstate me in my family posses-  
sions. Is it any wonder, then, that I prize it? Since For-  
30 tune has thought fit to bestow it upon me, I have only to  
use it properly and I shall arrive at the gold of which it is  
the index. Jupiter, bring me that *scarabæus*!"

"What! de bug, massa? I'd rudder not go fer trubble  
dat bug—you mus git him for your own self." Hereupon

Legrand arose, with a grave and stately air, and brought me the beetle from a glass case in which it was enclosed. It was a beautiful *scarabæus*, and, at that time, unknown to naturalists—of course a great prize in a scientific point of view. There were two round, black spots near one extremity of the back, and a long one near the other. The scales were exceedingly hard and glossy, with all the appearance of burnished gold. The weight of the insect was very remarkable, and, taking all things into consideration, I could hardly blame Jupiter for his opinion respecting it; but what to make of Legrand's agreement with that opinion, I could not, for the life of me, tell. 5 10

"I sent for you," said he, in a grandiloquent tone, when I had completed my examination of the beetle, "I sent for you, that I might have your counsel and assistance in 15 furthering the views of Fate and of the bug——"

"My dear Legrand," I cried, interrupting him, "you are certainly unwell, and had better use some little precautions. You shall go to bed, and I will remain with you a few days, until you get over this. You are feverish and——" 20

"Feel my pulse," said he.

I felt it, and to say the truth, found not the slightest indication of fever.

"But you may be ill, and yet have no fever. Allow me this once to prescribe for you. In the first place, go to 25 bed. In the next——"

"You are mistaken," he interposed, "I am as well as I can expect to be under the excitement which I suffer. If you really wish me well, you will relieve this excitement."

"And how is this to be done?" 30

"Very easily. Jupiter and myself are going upon an expedition into the hills, upon the mainland, and, in this expedition, we shall need the aid of some person in whom we can confide. You are the only one we can trust.

Whether we succeed or fail, the excitement which you now perceive in me will be equally allayed."

"I am anxious to oblige you in any way," I replied; "but do you mean to say that this infernal beetle has any  
5 connection with your expedition into the hills?"

"It has."

"Then, Legrand, I can become a party to no such absurd proceeding."

"I am sorry—very sorry—for we shall have to try it by  
10 ourselves."

"Try it by yourselves! The man is surely mad!—but stay—how long do you propose to be absent?"

"Probably all night. We shall start immediately, and be back, at all events, by sunrise."

15 "And will you promise me, upon your honor, that when this freak of yours is over, and the bug business (good God!) settled to your satisfaction, you will then return home and follow my advice implicitly, as that of your physician?"

20 "Yes; I promise; and now let us be off, for we have no time to lose."

With a heavy heart I accompanied my friend. We started about four o'clock—Legrand, Jupiter, the dog, and myself. Jupiter had with him the scythe and spades—  
25 the whole of which he insisted upon carrying, more through fear, it seemed to me, of trusting either of the implements within reach of his master, than from any excess of industry or complaisance. His demeanor was dogged in the extreme, and "dat d——d bug" were the sole words which  
30 escaped his lips during the journey. For my own part, I had charge of a couple of dark lanterns, while Legrand contended himself with the *scarabæus*, which he carried attached to the end of a bit of whip-cord; twirling it to and fro, with the air of a conjurer, as he went. When I

observed this last, plain evidence of my friend's aberration of mind, I could scarcely refrain from tears. I thought it best, however, to humor his fancy, at least for the present, or until I could adopt some more energetic measures with a chance of success. In the mean time I endeavored, but all in vain, to sound him in regard to the object of the expedition. Having succeeded in inducing me to accompany him, he seemed unwilling to hold conversation upon any topic of minor importance, and to all my questions vouchsafed no other reply than "we shall see!"

We crossed the creek at the head of the island by means of a skiff, and, ascending the high grounds on the shore of the mainland, proceeded in a northwesterly direction, through a tract of country excessively wild and desolate, where no trace of a human footstep was to be seen. Le-grand led the way with decision; pausing only for an instant, here and there, to consult what appeared to be certain landmarks of his own contrivance upon a former occasion.

In this manner we journeyed for about two hours, and the sun was just setting when we entered a region infinitely more dreary than any yet seen. It was a species of table-land, near the summit of an almost inaccessible hill, densely wooded from base to pinnacle, and interspersed with huge crags that appeared to lie loosely upon the soil, and in many cases were prevented from precipitating themselves into the valleys below merely by the support of the trees against which they reclined. Deep ravines, in various directions, gave an air of still sterner solemnity to the scene.

The natural platform to which we had clambered was thickly overgrown with brambles, through which we soon discovered that it would have been impossible to force our way but for the scythe; and Jupiter, by direction of

his master, proceeded to clear for us a path to the foot of an enormously tall tulip-tree, which stood, with some eight or ten oaks, upon the level, and far surpassed them all, and all other trees which I had then ever seen, in the beauty  
5 of its foliage and form, in the wide spread of its branches, and in the general majesty of its appearance. When we reached this tree, Legrand turned to Jupiter, and asked him if he thought he could climb it. The old man seemed a little staggered by the question, and for some moments  
10 made no reply. At length he approached the huge trunk, walked slowly around it, and examined it with minute attention. When he had completed his scrutiny, he merely said:

“Yes, massa, Jup climb any tree he ebber see in he  
15 life.”

“Then up with you as soon as possible, for it will soon be too dark to see what we are about.”

“How far mus go up, massa?” inquired Jupiter.

“Get up the main trunk first, and then I will tell you  
20 which way to go—and here—stop! take this beetle with you.”

“De bug, Massa Will!—de goole-bug!” cried the negro, drawing back in dismay—“what for mus tote de bug way up de tree?—d—n if I do!”

25 “If you are afraid, Jup, a great big negro like you, to take hold of a harmless little dead beetle, why, you can carry it up by this string—but, if you do not take it up with you in some way, I shall be under the necessity of breaking your head with this shovel.”

30 “What de matter now, massa?” said Jup, evidently shamed into compliance; “always want fur to raise fuss wid old nigger. Was only funnin anyhow. *Me* feered de bug! what I keer for de bug?” Here he took cautiously hold of the extreme end of the string, and, maintaining

the insect as far from his person as circumstances would permit, prepared to ascend the tree.

In youth, the tulip-tree, or *Liriodendron Tulipifera*, the most magnificent of American foresters, has a trunk peculiarly smooth, and often rises to a great height without lateral branches; but, in his riper age, the bark becomes gnarled and uneven, while many short limbs make their appearance on the stem. Thus the difficulty of ascension, in the present case, lay more in semblance than in reality. Embracing the huge cylinder, as closely as possible, with his arms and knees, seizing with his hands some projections, and resting his naked toes upon others, Jupiter, after one or two narrow escapes from falling, at length wriggled himself into the first great fork, and seemed to consider the whole business as virtually accomplished. The risk of the achievement was, in fact, now over, although the climber was some sixty or seventy feet from the ground.

"Which way mus go now, Massa Will?" he asked.

"Keep up the largest branch,—the one on this side," said Legrand. The negro obeyed him promptly, and apparently with but little trouble, ascending higher and higher, until no glimpse of his squat figure could be obtained through the dense foliage which enveloped it. Presently his voice was heard in a sort of halloo.

"How much fudder is got for go?"

"How high up are you?" asked Legrand.

"Ebber so fur," replied the negro; "can see de sky fru de top ob de tree."

"Never mind the sky, but attend to what I say. Look down the trunk and count the limbs below you on this side. How many limbs have you passed?"

"One, two, tree, four, fibe—I done pass fibe big limb, massa, pon dis side."

"Then go one limb higher."

In a few minutes the voice was heard again, announcing that the seventh limb was attained.

"Now, Jup," cried Legrand, evidently much excited, "I want you to work your way out upon that limb as far as you can. If you see anything strange, let me know."

By this time what little doubt I might have entertained of my poor friend's insanity was put finally at rest. I had no alternative but to conclude him stricken with lunacy, and I became seriously anxious about getting him home. While I was pondering upon what was best to be done, Jupiter's voice was again heard.

"Mos feerd for to ventur pon dis limb berry far—'tis dead limb putty much all de way."

"Did you say it was a *dead* limb, Jupiter?" cried Legrand in a quavering voice.

"Yes, massa, him dead as de door-nail—done up for sartain—done departed dis here life."

"What in the name of heaven shall I do?" asked Legrand, seemingly in the greatest distress.

"Do!" said I, glad of an opportunity to interpose a word, "why come home and go to bed. Come now!—that's a fine fellow. It's getting late, and, besides, you remember your promise."

"Jupiter," cried he, without heeding me in the least, "do you hear me?"

"Yes, Massa Will, hear you ebber so plain."

"Try the wood well, then, with your knife, and see if you think it *very* rotten."

"Him rotten, massa, sure nuff," replied the negro in a few moments, "but not so berry rotten as mought be. Mought ventur out leetle way pon de limb by myself, dat's true."

"By yourself!—what do you mean?"



"Why, I mean de bug. 'Tis *berry* hebbly bug. Spose I drop him down fuss, and den de limb won't break wid just de weight ob one nigger."

"You infernal scoundrel!" cried Legrand, apparently much relieved, "what do you mean by telling me such 5 nonsense as that? As sure as you let that beetle fall, I'll break your neck. Look here, Jupiter! do you hear me?"

"Yes, massa, needn't hollo at poor nigger dat style."

"Well! now listen!—if you will venture out on the limb as far as you think safe, and not let go the beetle, I'll make 10 you a present of a silver dollar as soon as you get down."

"I'm gwine, Massa Will—deed I is," replied the negro very promptly—"mos out to the eend now."

"*Out to the end!*" here fairly screamed Legrand, "do you say you are out to the end of that limb?" 15

"Soon be to de eend, massa,—o-o-o-o-oh! Lor-gol-a-marcy! what *is* dis here pon de tree?"

"Well!" cried Legrand, highly delighted, "what is it?"

"Why taint noffin but a skull—somebody bin lef him head up de tree, and de crows done gobble ebery bit ob 20 de meat off."

"A skull, you say!—very well!—how is it fastened to the limb?—what holds it on?"

"Sure nuff, massa; mus look. Why, dis berry curious sarcumstance, pon my word—dare's a great big nail in de 25 skull, what fastens ob it on to de tree."

"Well now, Jupiter, do exactly as I tell you—do you hear?"

"Yes, massa."

"Pay attention, then!—find the left eye of the skull." 30

"Hum! hoo! dat's good! why, dar aint no eye lef at all."

"Curse your stupidity! do you know your right hand from your left?"

"Yes, I nose dat—nose all about dat—'tis my lef hand what I chops de wood wid."

"To be sure! you are left-handed; and your left eye is on the same side as your left hand. Now, I suppose, you  
5 can find the left eye of the skull, or the place where the left eye has been. Have you found it?"

Here was a long pause. At length the negro asked,

"Is de lef eye of de skull pon de same side as de lef hand of de skull, too?—cause de skull aint got not a bit  
10 ob a hand at all—nebber mind! I got de lef eye now—here de lef eye! what mus do wid it?"

"Let the beetle drop through it, as far as the string will reach—but be careful and not let go your hold of the string."

15 "All dat done, Massa Will; mighty easy ting for to put de bug fru de hole—look out for him dar below!"

During this colloquy no portion of Jupiter's person could be seen; but the beetle, which he had suffered to descend, was now visible at the end of the string, and  
20 glistened, like a globe of burnished gold, in the last rays of the setting sun, some of which still faintly illumined the eminence upon which we stood. The *scarabæus* hung quite clear of any branches, and, if allowed to fall, would have fallen at our feet. Legrand immediately took the  
25 scythe, and cleared with it a circular space, three or four yards in diameter, just beneath the insect, and, having accomplished this, ordered Jupiter to let go the string and come down from the tree.

Driving a peg, with great nicety, into the ground, at the  
30 precise spot where the beetle fell, my friend now produced from his pocket a tape-measure. Fastening one end of this at that point of the trunk of the tree which was nearest the peg, he unrolled it till it reached the peg, and thence farther unrolled it, in the direction already established by

the two points of the tree and the peg, for the distance of fifty feet—Jupiter clearing away the brambles with the scythe. At the spot thus attained a second peg was driven, and about this, as a center, a rude circle, about four feet in diameter, described. Taking now a spade himself, and giving one to Jupiter and one to me, Legrand begged us to set about digging as quickly as possible. 5

To speak the truth, I had no especial relish for such amusement at any time, and, at that particular moment, would most willingly have declined it; for the night was coming on, and I felt much fatigued with the exercise already taken; but I saw no mode of escape, and was fearful of disturbing my poor friend's equanimity by a refusal. Could I have depended, indeed, upon Jupiter's aid, I would have had no hesitation in attempting to get the lunatic home by force; but I was too well assured of the old negro's disposition to hope that he would assist me, under any circumstances, in a personal contest with his master. I made no doubt that the latter had been infected with some of the innumerable Southern superstitions about money buried, and that his fantasy had received confirmation by the finding of the *scarabæus*, or, perhaps, by Jupiter's obstinacy in maintaining it to be "a bug of real gold." A mind disposed to lunacy would readily be led away by such suggestions, especially if chiming in with favorite preconceived ideas; and then I called to mind the poor fellow's speech about the beetle's being "the index of his fortune." Upon the whole, I was sadly vexed and puzzled, but at length I concluded to make a virtue of necessity—to dig with a good will, and thus the sooner to convince the visionary, by ocular demonstration, of the fallacy of the opinions he entertained. 10 18 15 20 25 16 30 17

The lanterns having been lit, we all fell to work with a zeal worthy a more rational cause; and, as the glare fell

upon our persons and implements, I could not help thinking how picturesque a group we composed, and how strange and suspicious our labors must have appeared to any interloper who, by chance, might have stumbled upon our  
5 whereabouts.

We dug very steadily for two hours. Little was said; and our chief embarrassment lay in the yelpings of the dog, who took exceeding interest in our proceedings. He, at length, became so obstreperous that we grew fearful of  
10 his giving the alarm to some stragglers in the vicinity; or, rather, this was the apprehension of Legrand; for myself, I should have rejoiced at any interruption which might have enabled me to get the wanderer home. The noise was, at length, very effectually silenced by Jupiter, who, getting  
15 out of the hole with a dogged air of deliberation, tied the brute's mouth up with one of his suspenders, and then returned, with a grave chuckle, to his task.

When the time mentioned had expired, we had reached a depth of five feet, and yet no signs of any treasure be-  
20 came manifest. A general pause ensued, and I began to hope that the farce was at an end. Legrand, however, although evidently much disconcerted, wiped his brow thoughtfully and recommenced. We had excavated the entire circle of four feet diameter, and now we slightly en-  
25 larged the limit, and went to the farther depth of two feet. Still nothing appeared. The gold-seeker, whom I sincerely pitied, at length clambered from the pit, with the bitterest disappointment imprinted upon every feature, and proceeded, slowly and reluctantly, to put on his coat, which  
30 he had thrown off at the beginning of his labor. In the mean time I made no remark. Jupiter, at a signal from his master, began to gather up his tools. This done, and the dog having been unmuzzled, we turned in profound silence towards home.

We had taken, perhaps, a dozen steps in this direction, when, with a loud oath, Legrand strode up to Jupiter, and seized him by the collar. The astonished negro opened his eyes and mouth to the fullest extent, let fall the spades, and fell upon his knees.

“You scoundrel,” said Legrand, hissing out the syllables from between his clenched teeth—“you infernal black villain!—speak, I tell you!—answer me this instant, without prevarication!—which—which is your left eye?”

“Oh, my golly, Massa Will! aint dis here my lef eye for sartain?” roared the terrified Jupiter, placing his hand upon his *right* organ of vision, and holding it there with a desperate pertinacity, as if in immediate dread of his master’s attempt at a gouge.

“I thought so!—I knew it! hurrah!” vociferated Legrand, letting the negro go, and executing a series of curvets and caracoles, much to the astonishment of his valet, who, arising from his knees, looked mutely from his master to myself, and then from myself to his master.

“Come! we must go back,” said the latter, “the game’s not up yet;” and he again led the way to the tulip-tree.

“Jupiter,” said he, when we reached its foot, “come here! was the skull nailed to the limb with the face outward, or with the face to the limb?”

“De face was out, massa, so dat de crows could get at de eyes good, widout any trouble.”

“Well, then, was it this eye or that through which you dropped the beetle?”—here Legrand touched each of Jupiter’s eyes.

“’Twas dis eye, massa—de lef eye—jis as you tell me,” and here it was his right eye that the negro indicated.

“That will do—we must try it again.”

Here my friend, about whose madness I now saw, or

fancied that I saw, certain indications of method, removed the peg which marked the spot where the beetle fell, to a spot about three inches to the westward of its former position. Taking, now, the tape-measure from the nearest  
5 point of the trunk to the peg, as before, and continuing the extension in a straight line to the distance of fifty feet, a spot was indicated, removed, by several yards, from the point at which we had been digging.

Around the new position a circle, somewhat larger than  
10 in the former instance, was now described, and we again set to work with the spades. I was dreadfully weary, but, scarcely understanding what had occasioned the change in my thoughts, I felt no longer any great aversion from the labor imposed. I had become most unaccountably in-  
15 terested—nay, even excited. Perhaps there was something, amid all the extravagant demeanor of Legrand—some air of forethought, or of deliberation—which impressed me. I dug eagerly, and now and then caught myself actually looking, with something that very much re-  
20 sembled expectation, for the fancied treasure, the vision of which had demented my unfortunate companion. At a period when such vagaries of thought most fully possessed me, and when we had been at work perhaps an hour and a half, we were again interrupted by the violent howlings of  
25 the dog. His uneasiness, in the first instance, had been evidently but the result of playfulness or caprice, but he now assumed a bitter and serious tone. Upon Jupiter's again attempting to muzzle him, he made furious resistance, and, leaping into the hole, tore up the mould  
30 frantically with his claws. In a few seconds he had uncovered a mass of human bones, forming two complete skeletons, intermingled with several buttons of metal, and what appeared to be the dust of decayed woollen. One or two strokes of a spade upturned the blade of a large Spanish

knife, and, as we dug farther, three or four loose pieces of gold and silver coin came to light.

At sight of these the joy of Jupiter could scarcely be restrained, but the countenance of his master wore an air of extreme disappointment. He urged us, however, to continue our exertions, and the words were hardly uttered when I stumbled and fell forward, having caught the toe of my boot in a large ring of iron that lay half buried in the loose earth. 5

We now worked in earnest, and never did I pass ten minutes of more intense excitement. During this interval we had fairly unearthed an oblong chest of wood, which, from its perfect preservation and wonderful hardness, had plainly been subjected to some mineralizing process—perhaps that of the bichloride of mercury. This box was three feet and a half long, three feet broad, and two and a half feet deep. It was firmly secured by bands of wrought iron, riveted, and forming a kind of trellis-work over the whole. On each side of the chest, near the top, were three rings of iron—six in all—by means of which a firm hold could be obtained by six persons. Our utmost united endeavors served only to disturb the coffer very slightly in its bed. We at once saw the impossibility of removing so great a weight. Luckily, the sole fastenings of the lid consisted of two sliding bolts. These we drew back—trembling and panting with anxiety. In an instant, a treasure of incalculable value lay gleaming before us. As the rays of the lanterns fell within the pit, there flashed upwards, from a confused heap of gold and of jewels, a glow and a glare that absolutely dazzled our eyes. 20 25 30

I shall not pretend to describe the feelings with which I gazed. Amazement was, of course, predominant. Legrand appeared exhausted with excitement, and spoke very few words. Jupiter's countenance wore, for some minutes, as

deadly a pallor as it is possible, in the nature of things, for any negro's visage to assume. He seemed stupefied—thunderstricken. Presently he fell upon his knees in the pit, and, burying his naked arms up to the elbows in gold, let them there remain, as if enjoying the luxury of a bath. At length, with a deep sigh, he exclaimed, as if in a soliloquy:

“And dis all cum ob de goole-bug! de putty goole-bug! de poor little goole-bug, what I boosed in dat sabage kind ob style! Aint you shamed ob yourself, nigger?—answer me dat!”

It became necessary, at last, that I should arouse both master and valet to the expediency of removing the treasure. It was growing late, and it behooved us to make exertion, that we might get everything housed before daylight. It was difficult to say what should be done, and much time was spent in deliberation—so confused were the ideas of all. We finally lightened the box by removing two thirds of its contents, when we were enabled, with some trouble, to raise it from the hole. The articles taken out were deposited among the brambles, and the dog left to guard them, with strict orders from Jupiter neither, upon any pretence, to stir from the spot, nor to open his mouth until our return. We then hurriedly made for home with the chest; reaching the hut in safety, but after excessive toil, at one o'clock in the morning. Worn out as we were, it was not in human nature to do more just now. We rested until two, and had supper; starting for the hills immediately afterwards, armed with three stout sacks, which by good luck were upon the premises. A little before four we arrived at the pit, divided the remainder of the booty, as equally as might be, among us, and, leaving the holes unfilled, again set out for the hut, at which, for the second time, we deposited our golden burdens, just



as the first streaks of the dawn gleamed from over the tree-tops in the East.

We were now thoroughly broken down; but the intense excitement of the time denied us repose. After an unquiet slumber of some three or four hours' duration, we awoke, as if by preconcert, to make examination of our treasure. 5

The chest had been full to the brim, and we spent the whole day, and the greater part of the next night, in a scrutiny of its contents. There had been nothing like order or arrangement. Everything had been heaped in promiscuously. Having assorted all with care, we found ourselves possessed of even vaster wealth than we had at first supposed. In coin there was rather more than four hundred and fifty thousand dollars: estimating the value of the pieces, as accurately as we could, by the tables of the period. There was not a particle of silver. All was gold of antique date and of great variety: French, Spanish, and German money, with a few English guineas, and some counters, of which we had never seen specimens before. 15 There were several very large and heavy coins, so worn that we could make nothing of their inscriptions. There was no American money. The value of the jewels we found more difficulty in estimating. There were diamonds—some of them exceedingly large and fine—a hundred and ten in all, and not one of them small; eighteen rubies of remarkable brilliancy; three hundred and ten emeralds, all very beautiful; and twenty-one sapphires, with an opal. These stones had all been broken from their settings, and thrown loose in the chest. The settings themselves, which we picked out from among the other gold, appeared to have been beaten up with hammers, as if to prevent identification. Besides all this, there was a vast quantity of solid gold ornaments: nearly two hundred massive finger 25 30

and ear rings; rich chains—thirty of these, if I remember; eighty-three very large and heavy crucifixes; five gold censers of great value; a prodigious golden punch-bowl, ornamented with richly chased vine-leaves and Bacchanal  
5 ian figures; with two sword-handles exquisitely embossed, and many other smaller articles which I cannot recollect. The weight of these valuables exceeded three hundred and fifty pounds avoirdupois; and in this estimate I have not included one hundred and ninety-seven superb gold  
10 watches; three of the number being worth each five hundred dollars, if one. Many of them were very old, and as timekeepers valueless, the works having suffered more or less from corrosion; but all were richly jewelled and in cases of great worth. We estimated the entire contents of the  
15 chest, that night, at a million and a half of dollars; and, upon the subsequent disposal of the trinkets and jewels (a few being retained for our own use), it was found that we had greatly undervalued the treasure.

When, at length, we had concluded our examination, and  
20 the intense excitement of the time had in some measure subsided, Legrand, who saw that I was dying with impatience for a solution of this most extraordinary riddle, entered into a full detail of all the circumstances connected with it.

25 “You remember,” said he, “the night when I handed you the rough sketch I had made of the *scarabæus*. You recollect also, that I became quite vexed at you for insisting that my drawing resembled a death’s-head. When you first made this assertion I thought you were jesting; but  
30 afterwards I called to mind the peculiar spots on the back of the insect, and admitted to myself that your remark had some little foundation in fact. Still, the sneer at my graphic powers irritated me—for I am considered a good artist—and, therefore, when you handed me the scrap of

parchment, I was about to crumple it up and throw it angrily into the fire."

"The scrap of paper, you mean," said I.

"No: it had much of the appearance of paper, and at first I supposed it to be such, but when I came to draw 5 upon it, I discovered it, at once, to be a piece of very thin parchment. It was quite dirty, you remember. Well, as I was in the very act of crumpling it up, my glance fell upon the sketch at which you had been looking, and you may imagine my astonishment when I perceived, in fact, 10 the figure of a death's-head just where, it seemed to me, I had made the drawing of the beetle. For a moment I was too much amazed to think with accuracy. I knew that my design was very different in detail from this—although there was a certain similarity in general outline. Presently 15 I took a candle and, seating myself at the other end of the room, proceeded to scrutinize the parchment more closely. Upon turning it over, I saw my own sketch upon the reverse, just as I had made it. My first idea, now, was mere surprise at the really remarkable similarity of outline—at 20 the singular coincidence involved in the fact that, unknown to me, there should have been a skull upon the other side of the parchment, immediately beneath my figure of the *scarabæus*, and that this skull, not only in outline, but in size, should so closely resemble my drawing. I say the 25 singularity of this coincidence absolutely stupefied me for a time. This is the usual effect of such coincidences. The mind struggles to establish a connection—a sequence of cause and effect—and, being unable to do so, suffers a species of temporary paralysis. But, when I recovered 30 from this stupor, there dawned upon me gradually a conviction which startled me even far more than the coincidence. I began distinctly, positively, to remember that there had been *no* drawing on the parchment when I made

my sketch of the *scarabæus*. I became perfectly certain of this; for I recollected turning up first one side and then the other, in search of the cleanest spot. Had the skull been then there, of course I could not have failed to notice it.

5 Here was indeed a mystery which I felt it impossible to explain; but, even at that early moment, there seemed to glimmer, faintly, within the most remote and secret chambers of my intellect, a glow-worm-like conception of that truth which last night's adventure brought to so magnificent a demonstration. I arose at once, and, putting the

10 parchment securely away, dismissed all farther reflection until I should be alone.

“When you had gone, and when Jupiter was fast asleep, I betook myself to a more methodical investigation of the

15 affair. In the first place I considered the manner in which the parchment had come into my possession. The spot where we discovered the *scarabæus* was on the coast of the mainland, about a mile eastward of the island, and but a short distance above high-water mark. Upon my taking

20 hold of it, it gave me a sharp bite, which caused me to let it drop. Jupiter, with his accustomed caution, before seizing the insect, which had flown towards him, looked about him for a leaf, or something of that nature, by which to take hold of it. It was at this moment that his eyes, and

25 mine also, fell upon the scrap of parchment, which I then supposed to be paper. It was lying half-buried in the sand, a corner sticking up. Near the spot where we found it, I observed the remnants of the hull of what appeared to have been a ship's long boat. The wreck seemed to have been

30 there for a very great while; for the resemblance to boat timbers could scarcely be traced.

“Well, Jupiter picked up the parchment, wrapped the beetle in it, and gave it to me. Soon afterwards we turned to go home, and on the way met Lieutenant G——. I

showed him the insect, and he begged me to let him take it to the fort. On my consenting, he thrust it forthwith into his waistcoat pocket, without the parchment in which it had been wrapped, and which I had continued to hold in my hand during his inspection. Perhaps he dreaded my changing my mind, and thought it best to make sure of the prize at once—you know how enthusiastic he is on all subjects connected with Natural History. At the same time, without being conscious of it, I must have deposited the parchment in my own pocket.

“You remember that when I went to the table, for the purpose of making a sketch of the beetle, I found no paper where it was usually kept. I looked in the drawer, and found none there. I searched my pockets, hoping to find an old letter, and then my hand fell upon the parchment. I thus detail the precise mode in which it came into my possession; for the circumstances impressed me with peculiar force.

“No doubt you will think me fanciful—but I had already established a kind of *connection*. I had put together two links of a great chain. There was a boat lying on a sea-coast, and not far from the boat was a parchment—*not a paper*—with a skull depicted on it. You will, of course, ask ‘where is the connection?’ I reply that the skull, or death’s-head, is the well-known emblem of the pirate. The flag of the death’s-head is hoisted in all engagements.

“I have said that the scrap was parchment, and not paper. Parchment is durable—almost imperishable. Matters of little moment are rarely consigned to parchment; since, for the mere ordinary purposes of drawing or writing, it is not nearly so well adapted as paper. This reflection suggested some meaning—some relevancy—in the death’s-head. I did not fail to observe, also, the *form* of the parchment. Although one of its corners had been, by

some accident, destroyed, it could be seen that the original form was oblong. It was just such a slip, indeed, as might have been chosen for a memorandum—for a record of something to be long remembered and carefully preserved.”

5 “But,” I interposed, “you say that the skull was *not* upon the parchment when you made the drawing of the beetle. How then do you trace any connection between the boat and the skull—since this latter, according to your own admission, must have been designed (God only knows  
10 how or by whom) at some period subsequent to your sketching the *scarabæus*?”

“Ah, hereupon turns the whole mystery; although the secret, at this point, I had comparatively little difficulty in solving. My steps were sure, and could afford but a  
15 single result. I reasoned, for example, thus: When I drew the *scarabæus*, there was no skull apparent on the parchment. When I had completed the drawing I gave it to you, and observed you narrowly until you returned it. *You*, therefore, did not design the skull, and no one else  
20 was present to do it. Then it was not done by human agency. And nevertheless it was done.

“At this stage of my reflections I endeavored to remember, and *did* remember, with entire distinctness, every incident which occurred about the period in question. The  
25 weather was chilly (O rare and happy accident!), and a fire was blazing on the hearth. I was heated with exercise and sat near the table. You, however, had drawn a chair close to the chimney. Just as I placed the parchment in your hand, and as you were in the act of inspecting it, Wolf, the  
30 Newfoundland, entered, and leaped upon your shoulders. With your left hand you caressed him and kept him off, while your right, holding the parchment, was permitted to fall listlessly between your knees, and in close proximity to the fire. At one moment I thought the blaze had caught

it, and was about to caution you, but, before I could speak, you had withdrawn it, and were engaged in its examination. When I considered all these particulars, I doubted not for a moment that *heat* had been the agent in bringing to light, on the parchment, the skull which I saw designed on it. You are well aware that chemical preparations exist, and have existed time out of mind, by means of which it is possible to write on either paper or vellum, so that the characters shall become visible only when subjected to the action of fire. Zaffre, digested in *aqua regia*, and diluted with four times its weight of water, is sometimes employed; a green tint results. The regulus of cobalt, dissolved in spirit of nitre, gives a red. These colors disappear at longer or shorter intervals after the material written upon cools, but again become apparent upon the re-application of heat.

"I now scrutinized the death's-head with care. Its outer edges—the edges of the drawing nearest the edge of the vellum—were far more *distinct* than the others. It was clear that the action of the caloric had been imperfect or unequal. I immediately kindled a fire, and subjected every portion of the parchment to a glowing heat. At first, the only effect was the strengthening of the faint lines in the skull; but, on persevering in the experiment, there became visible at the corner of the slip, diagonally opposite to the spot in which the death's-head was delineated, the figure of what I at first supposed to be a goat. A closer scrutiny, however, satisfied me that it was intended for a kid."

"Ha! ha!" said I, "to be sure I have no right to laugh at you—a million and a half of money is too serious a matter for mirth—but you are not about to establish a third link in your chain: you will not find any especial connection between your pirates and a goat; pirates, you know, have

nothing to do with goats; they appertain to the farming interest."

"But I have just said that the figure was *not* that of a goat."

5 "Well, a kid, then—pretty much the same thing."

"Pretty much, but not altogether," said Legrand. "You may have heard of one *Captain* Kidd. I at once looked on the figure of the animal as a kind of punning or hieroglyphical signature. I say signature; because its  
10 position on the vellum suggested this idea. The death's-head at the corner diagonally opposite had, in the same manner, the air of a stamp, or seal. But I was sorely put out by the absence of all else—of the body to my imagined instrument—of the text for my context."

15 "I presume you expected to find a letter between the stamp and the signature."

"Something of that kind. The fact is, I felt irresistibly impressed with a presentiment of some vast good fortune impending. I can scarcely say why. Perhaps, after all,  
20 it was rather a desire than an actual belief;—but do you know that Jupiter's silly words, about the bug being of solid gold, had a remarkable effect on my fancy? And then the series of accidents and coincidences—these were so *very* extraordinary. Do you observe how mere an accident  
25 it was that these events should have occurred on the *sole* day of all the year in which it has been, or may be, sufficiently cool for fire, and that without the fire, or without the intervention of the dog at the precise moment in which he appeared, I should never have become aware of the  
30 death's-head, and so never the possessor of the treasure?"

"But proceed—I am all impatience."

"Well; you have heard, of course, the many stories current—the thousand vague rumors afloat about money buried, somewhere on the Atlantic coast, by Kidd and his



associates. These rumors must have had some foundation in fact. And that the rumors have existed so long and so continuously, could have resulted, it appeared to me, only from the circumstance of the buried treasure still *remaining* entombed. Had Kidd concealed his plunder for a time, and afterwards reclaimed it, the rumors would scarcely have reached us in their present unvarying form. You will observe that the stories told are all about money-seekers, not about money-finders. Had the pirate recovered his money, there the affair would have dropped. It seemed to me that some accident—say the loss of a memorandum indicating its locality—had deprived him of the means of recovering it, and that this accident had become known to his followers, who otherwise might never have heard that treasure had been concealed at all, and who, busying themselves in vain, because unguided, attempts to regain it, had given first birth, and then universal currency, to the reports which are now so common. Have you ever heard of any important treasure being unearthed along the coast?"

"Never."

"But that Kidd's accumulations were immense is well known. I took it for granted, therefore, that the earth still held them; and you will scarcely be surprised when I tell you that I felt a hope, nearly amounting to certainty, that the parchment so strangely found involved a lost record of the place of deposit."

"But how did you proceed?"

"I held the vellum again to the fire, after increasing the heat, but nothing appeared. I now thought it possible that the coating of dirt might have something to do with the failure; so I carefully rinsed the parchment by pouring warm water over it, and, having done this, I placed it in a tin pan, with the skull downwards, and put the pan upon a furnace of lighted charcoal. In a few minutes, the pan

having become thoroughly heated, I removed the slip, and, to my inexpressible joy, found it spotted, in several places, with what appeared to be figures arranged in lines. Again I placed it in the pan, and suffered it to remain another  
5 minute. Upon taking it off, the whole was just as you see it now."

Here Legrand, having reheated the parchment, submitted it to my inspection. The following characters were rudely traced, in a red tint, between the death's-head and  
10 the goat:—

53†††305))6\*;4826)4†.)4†);806\*;48†8†(60))85;;]8\*;†\*8†83(88)5\*†;46  
(;88\*96\*?;8)\*†(;485);5\*†2:\*†(;4956\*2(5\*—4)8†8\*;4069285);)6†8)4††;†  
(†9;4808†;8:8††;48†85;4)485†528806\*8† (†9;48;(88;4(†?34;48)4†;†6†;:  
†88;†?;

15 "But," said I, returning him the slip, "I am as much in the dark as ever. Were all the jewels of Golconda awaiting me on my solution of this enigma, I am quite sure that I should be unable to earn them."

"And yet," said Legrand, "the solution is by no means  
20 so difficult as you might be led to imagine from the first hasty inspection of the characters. These characters, as any one might readily guess, form a cipher—that is to say, they convey a meaning; but then, from what is known of Kidd, I could not suppose him capable of constructing  
25 any of the more abstruse cryptographs. I made up my mind, at once, that this was of a simple species—such, however, as would appear, to the crude intellect of the sailor, absolutely insoluble without the key."

"And you really solved it?"

30 "Readily; I have solved others of an abstruseness ten thousand times greater. Circumstances, and a certain bias of mind, have led me to take interest in such riddles, and it may well be doubted whether human ingenuity can construct an enigma of the kind which human ingenuity may

not, by proper application, resolve. In fact, having once established connected and legible characters, I scarcely gave a thought to the mere difficulty of developing their import.

"In the present case—indeed in all cases of secret writing—the first question regards the *language* of the cipher; for the principles of solution, so far, especially, as the more simple ciphers are concerned, depend on, and are varied by, the genius of the particular idiom. In general, there is no alternative but experiment (directed by probabilities) of every tongue known to him who attempts the solution, until the true one be attained. But, with the cipher now before us, all difficulty is removed by the signature. The pun upon the word 'Kidd' is appreciable in no other language than the English. But for this consideration I should have begun my attempts with the Spanish and French, as the tongues in which a secret of this kind would most naturally have been written by a pirate of the Spanish main. As it was, I assumed the cryptograph to be English.

"You observe there are no divisions between the words. Had there been divisions, the task would have been comparatively easy. In such case I should have commenced with a collation and analysis of the shorter words, and, had a word of a single letter occurred, as is most likely (*a* or *I*, for example), I should have considered the solution as assured. But, there being no division, my first step was to ascertain the predominant letters, as well as the least frequent. Counting all, I constructed a table, thus:

Of the character 8 there are	33
;	26
4	19
†)	16
*	13
5	12
6	11

Of the character † 1 there are	8
o	6
9 2	5
: 3	4
?	3
¶	2
]—.	1

"Now, in English, the letter which most frequently occurs is *e*. Afterwards the succession runs thus: *a o i d h n r s t u y c f g l m w b k p q x z*. *E* predominates, however, so remarkably that an individual sentence of any  
5 length is rarely seen, in which it is not the prevailing character.

"Here, then, we have, in the very beginning, the groundwork for something more than a mere guess. The general use which may be made of the table is obvious—but, in  
10 this particular cipher, we shall only very partially require its aid. As our predominant character is 8, we will commence by assuming it as the *e* of the natural alphabet. To verify the supposition, let us observe if the 8 be seen often in couples—for *e* is doubled with great frequency in  
15 English—in such words, for example, as 'meet,' 'fleet,' 'speed,' 'seen,' 'been,' 'agree,' &c. In the present instance we see it doubled no less than five times, although the cryptograph is brief.

"Let us assume 8, then, as *e*. Now, of all *words* in the  
20 language, 'the' is most usual; let us see, therefore, whether there are not repetitions of any three characters, in the same order of collocation, the last of them being 8. If we discover repetitions of such letters, so arranged, they will most probably represent the word 'the.' On inspection,  
25 we find no less than seven such arrangements, the characters being ;48. We may, therefore, assume that the semicolon represents *t*, that 4 represents *h*, and that 8 represents *e*—the last being now well confirmed. Thus a great step has been taken.

30 "But, having established a single word, we are enabled to establish a vastly important point; that is to say, several commencements and terminations of other words. Let us refer, for example, to the last instance but one, in which the combination ;48 occurs—not far from the end

of the cipher. We know that the semicolon immediately ensuing is the commencement of a word, and, of the six characters succeeding this 'the,' we are cognizant of no less than five. Let us set these characters down, thus, by the letters we know them to represent, leaving a space for the unknown—

t eeth.

"Here we are enabled, at once, to discard the '*th*,' as forming no portion of the word commencing with the first *t*; since, by experiment of the entire alphabet for a letter adapted to the vacancy, we perceive that no word can be formed of which this *th* can be a part. We are thus narrowed into

t ee,

and, going through the alphabet, if necessary, as before, we arrive at the word 'tree' as the sole possible reading. We thus gain another letter, *r*, represented by (, with the words 'the tree' in juxtaposition.

"Looking beyond these words, for a short distance, we again see the combination ;48, and employ it by way of termination to what immediately precedes. We have thus this arrangement:

the tree ;4(†?34 the,

or, substituting the natural letters, where known, it reads thus:

the tree thr†?3h the.

"Now, if, in place of the unknown characters, we leave blank spaces, or substitute dots, we read thus:

the tree thr . . . h the,

when the word '*through*' makes itself evident at once. But this discovery gives us three new letters, *o*, *u*, and *g*, represented by † ? and 3.

"Looking now, narrowly, through the cipher for com-

binations of known characters, we find, not very far from the beginning this arrangement,

83(88, or egree,

which, plainly, is the conclusion of the word 'degree,' and gives us another letter, *d*, represented by †.

"Four letters beyond the word 'degree,' we perceive the combination

;46(;88\*

"Translating the known characters, and representing the unknown by dots, as before, we read thus:

th . rtee .

an arrangement immediately suggestive of the word 'thirteen,' and again furnishing us with two new characters, *i* and *n*, represented by 6 and \*.

"Referring, now, to the beginning of the cryptograph, we find the combination,

53†††.

"Translating, as before, we obtain

†  
. good,

which assures us that the first letter is *A*, and that the first two words are 'A good.'

"To avoid confusion, it is now time that we arrange our key, as far as discovered, in a tabular form. It will stand thus:

5	represents a	
†	"	d
8	"	e
3	"	g
4	"	h
6	"	i
*	"	n
‡	"	o
(	"	r
;	"	t

"We have, therefore, no less than ten of the most important letters represented, and it will be unnecessary to proceed with the details of the solution. I have said enough to convince you that ciphers of this nature are readily soluble, and to give you some insight into the rationale of their development. But be assured that the specimen before us appertains to the very simplest species of cryptograph. It now only remains to give you the full translation of the characters upon the parchment, as unriddled. Here it is:

*"A good glass in the bishop's hostel in the devil's seat twenty one degrees and thirteen minutes north-east and by north main branch seventh limb east side shoot from the left eye of the death's-head a bee-line from the tree through the shot fifty feet out."*

"But," said I, "the enigma seems still in as bad a condition as ever. How is it possible to extort a meaning from all this jargon about 'devil's seats,' 'death's-heads,' and 'bishop's hotels'?"

"I confess," replied Legrand, "that the matter still wears a serious aspect, when regarded with a casual glance. My first endeavor was to divide the sentence into the natural division intended by the cryptographist."

"You mean, to punctuate it?"

"Something of that kind."

"But how was it possible to effect this?"

"I reflected that it had been a *point* with the writer to run his words together without division, so as to increase the difficulty of solution. Now, a not over-acute man, in pursuing such an object, would be nearly certain to overdo the matter. When, in the course of his composition, he arrived at a break in his subject which would naturally require a pause, or a point, he would be exceedingly apt

to run his characters, at this place, more than usually close together. If you will observe the MS., in the present instance, you will easily detect five such cases of unusual crowding. Acting on this hint, I made the division thus:

5     *“‘A good glass in the Bishop’s hostel in the Devil’s seat—twenty-one degrees and thirteen minutes—north-east and by north—main branch seventh limb east side—shoot from the left eye of the death’s-head—a bee-line from the tree through the shot fifty feet out.’”*

10     “Even this division,” said I, “leaves me still in the dark.”  
      “It left me also in the dark,” replied Legrand, “for a few days; during which I made diligent inquiry, in the neighborhood of Sullivan’s Island, for any building which went by the name of the ‘Bishop’s Hotel;’ for, of course, I  
15     dropped the obsolete word ‘hostel.’ Gaining no information on the subject, I was on the point of extending my sphere of search, and proceeding in a more systematic manner, when one morning it entered into my head, quite suddenly, that this Bishop’s ‘Hostel’ might have some  
20     reference to an old family, of the name of Bessop, which, time out of mind, had held possession of an ancient manor-house, about four miles to the northward of the island. I accordingly went over to the plantation, and reinstituted my inquiries among the older negroes of the place. At  
25     length one of the most aged of the women said that she had heard of such a place as *Bessop’s Castle*, and thought that she could guide me to it, but that it was not a castle, nor a tavern, but a high rock.

      “I offered to pay her well for her trouble, and, after  
30     some demur, she consented to accompany me to the spot. We found it without much difficulty, when, dismissing her, I proceeded to examine the place. The ‘castle’ consisted of an irregular assemblage of cliffs and rocks—one



of the latter being quite remarkable for its height as well as for its insulated and artificial appearance. I clambered to its apex, and then felt much at a loss as to what should be next done.

"While I was busied in reflection, my eyes fell on a 5  
narrow ledge in the eastern face of the rock, perhaps a yard below the summit upon which I stood. This ledge projected about eighteen inches, and was not more than a foot wide, while a niche in the cliff just above it gave it a rude resemblance to one of the hollow-backed chairs used 10  
by our ancestors. I made no doubt that here was the 'devil's seat' alluded to in the MS., and now I seemed to grasp the full secret of the riddle.

"The 'good glass,' I knew, could have reference to nothing but a telescope; for the word 'glass' is rarely em- 15  
ployed in any other sense by seamen. Now here, I at once saw, was a telescope to be used, and a definite point of view, *admitting no variation*, from which to use it. Nor did I hesitate to believe that the phrases, 'twenty-one degrees and thirteen minutes,' and 'north-east and by north,' 20  
were intended as directions for the levelling of the glass. Greatly excited by these discoveries, I hurried home, procured a telescope, and returned to the rock.

"I let myself down to the ledge, and found that it was impossible to retain a seat on it unless in one particular 25  
position. This fact confirmed my preconceived idea. I proceeded to use the glass. Of course, the 'twenty-one degrees and thirteen minutes' could allude to nothing but elevation above the visible horizon, since the horizontal direction was clearly indicated by the words, 'north-east 30  
and by north.' This latter direction I at once established by means of a pocket-compass; then, pointing the glass as nearly at an angle of twenty-one degrees of elevation as I could do it by guess, I moved it cautiously up or down,

until my attention was arrested by a circular rift or opening in the foliage of a large tree that overtopped its fellows in the distance. In the center of this rift I perceived a white spot, but could not, at first, distinguish what it was.

5 Adjusting the focus of the telescope, I again looked, and now made it out to be a human skull.

“On this discovery I was so sanguine as to consider the enigma solved; for the phrase ‘main branch, seventh limb, east side,’ could refer only to the position of the skull on the  
10 tree, while ‘shoot from the left eye of the death’s-head’ admitted, also, of but one interpretation, in regard to a search for buried treasure. I perceived that the design was to drop a bullet from the left eye of the skull, and that a bee-line, or, in other words, a straight line, drawn from  
15 the nearest point of the trunk through ‘the shot’ (or the spot where the bullet fell), and thence extended to a distance of fifty feet, would indicate a definite point—and beneath this point I thought it at least *possible* that a deposit of value lay concealed.”

20 “All this,” I said “is exceedingly clear, and, although ingenious, still simple and explicit. When you left the Bishop’s Hotel, what then?”

“Why, having carefully taken the bearings of the tree, I turned homewards. The instant that I left ‘the devil’s  
25 seat,’ however, the circular rift vanished; nor could I get a glimpse of it afterwards, turn as I would. What seems to me the chief ingenuity in this whole business, is the fact (for repeated experiment has convinced me it *is* a fact) that the circular opening in question is visible from no  
30 other attainable point of view than that afforded by the narrow ledge on the face of the rock.

“In this expedition to the ‘Bishop’s Hotel’ I had been attended by Jupiter, who had no doubt observed, for some weeks past, the abstraction of my demeanor, and took

especial care not to leave me alone. But on the next day, getting up very early, I contrived to give him the slip, and went into the hills in search of the tree. After much toil I found it. When I came home at night my valet proposed to give me a flogging. With the rest of the adventure I believe you are as well acquainted as myself.” 5

“I suppose,” said I, “you missed the spot, in the first attempt at digging, through Jupiter’s stupidity in letting the bug fall through the right instead of through the left eye of the skull.” 10

“Precisely. This mistake made a difference of about two inches and a half in the ‘shot’—that is to say, in the position of the peg nearest the tree; and had the treasure been *beneath* the ‘shot,’ the error would have been of little moment; but ‘the shot,’ together with the nearest point of the tree, were merely two points for the establishment of a line of direction; of course the error, however trivial in the beginning, increased as we proceeded with the line, and, by the time we had gone fifty feet, threw us quite off the scent. But for my deep-seated convictions that treasure was here somewhere actually buried, we might have had all our labor in vain.” 15 20

“I presume the fancy of the *skull*—of letting fall a bullet through the skull’s eye—was suggested to Kidd by the piratical flag. No doubt he felt a kind of poetical consistency in recovering his money through this ominous insignium.” 25

“Perhaps so; still, I cannot help thinking that common-sense had quite as much to do with the matter as poetical consistency. To be visible from the Devil’s seat, it was necessary that the object, if small, should be *white*; and there is nothing like your human skull for retaining and even increasing its whiteness under exposure to all vicissitudes of weather.” 30

"But your grandiloquence, and your conduct in swinging the beetle—how excessively odd! I was sure you were mad. And why did you insist on letting fall the bug, instead of a bullet, from the skull?"

5 "Why, to be frank, I felt somewhat annoyed by your evident suspicions touching my sanity, and so resolved to punish you quietly, in my own way, by a little bit of sober mystification. For this reason I swung the beetle, and for this reason I let it fall from the tree. An observation of  
10 yours about its great weight suggested the latter idea."

"Yes, I perceive; and now there is only one point which puzzles me. What are we to make of the skeletons found in the hole?"

"That is a question I am no more able to answer than  
15 yourself. There seems, however, only one plausible way of accounting for them—and yet it is dreadful to believe in such atrocity as my suggestion would imply. It is clear that Kidd—if Kidd indeed secreted this treasure, which I doubt not—it is clear that he must have had assistance in  
20 the labor. But, the worst of this labor concluded, he may have thought it expedient to remove all participants in his secret. Perhaps a couple of blows with a mattock were sufficient, while his coadjutors were busy in the pit; perhaps it required a dozen—who shall tell?"

## THE SIGNAL-MAN

By CHARLES DICKENS

“HALLOA! Below there!”

When he heard a voice thus calling to him, he was standing at the door of his box, with a flag in his hand, furled round its short pole. One would have thought, considering the nature of the ground, that he could not have doubted 5 from what quarter the voice came; but instead of looking up to where I stood on the top of the steep cutting nearly over his head, he turned himself about, and looked down the Line. There was something remarkable in his manner of doing so, though I could not have said for my life what. 10 But I know it was remarkable enough to attract my notice, even though his figure was foreshortened and shadowed, down in the deep trench, and mine was high above him, so steeped in the glow of an angry sunset, that I had shaded my eyes with my hand before I saw him at all. 15

“Hallos! Below!”

From looking down the Line, he turned himself about again, and, raising his eyes, saw my figure high above him.

“Is there any path by which I can come down and speak to you?” 20

He looked up at me without replying, and I looked down at him without pressing him too soon with a repetition of my idle question. Just then there came a vague vibration in the earth and air, quickly changing into a violent pulsation, and an oncoming rush that caused me to start back, 25 as though it had force to draw me down. When such vapor as rose to my height from this rapid train had passed me, and was skimming away over the landscape, I looked down

again, and saw him refurling the flag he had shown while the train went by.

I repeated my inquiry. After a pause, during which he seemed to regard me with fixed attention, he motioned with  
5 his rolled-up flag towards a point on my level, some two or three hundred yards distant. I called down to him, "All right!" and made for that point. There, by dint of looking closely about me, I found a rough zigzag descending path notched out, which I followed.

10 The cutting was extremely deep, and unusually precipitate. It was made through a clammy stone, that became oozy and wetter as I went down. For these reasons, I found the way long enough to give me time to recall a singular air of reluctance or compulsion with which he had  
15 pointed out the path.

When I came down low enough upon the zigzag descent to see him again, I saw that he was standing between the rails on the way by which the train had lately passed, in an attitude as if he were waiting for me to appear. He had  
20 his left hand at his chin, and that left elbow rested on his right hand, crossed over his breast. His attitude was one of such expectation and watchfulness that I stopped a moment, wondering at it.

I resumed my downward way, and stepping out upon the  
25 level of the railroad, and drawing nearer to him, saw that he was a dark sallow man, with a dark beard and rather heavy eyebrows. His post was in as solitary and dismal a place as ever I saw. On either side, a dripping-wet wall of jagged stone, excluding all view but a strip of sky; the per-  
30 spective one way only a crooked prolongation of this great dungeon; the shorter perspective in the other direction terminating in a gloomy red light, and the gloomier entrance to a black tunnel, in whose massive architecture there was a barbarous, depressing, and forbidding air. So

little sunlight ever found its way to this spot, that it had an earthy, deadly smell; and so much cold wind rushed through it, that it struck chill to me, as if I had left the natural world.

Before he stirred, I was near enough to him to have touched him. Not even then removing his eyes from mine, he stepped back one step, and lifted his hand. 5

This was a lonesome post to occupy (I said), and it had riveted my attention when I looked down from up yonder. A visitor was a rarity, I should suppose; not an unwelcome 10 rarity, I hoped? In me, he merely saw a man who had been shut up within narrow limits all his life, and who, being at last set free, had a newly-awakened interest in these great works. To such purpose I spoke to him; but I am far from sure of the terms I used; for, besides that I 15 am not happy in opening any conversation, there was something in the man that daunted me.

He directed a most curious look towards the red light near the tunnel's mouth, and looked all about it, as if something were missing from it, and then looked at me. 20

That light was part of his charge? Was it not?

He answered in a low voice,—“Don't you know it is?”

The monstrous thought came into my mind, as I perused the fixed eyes and the saturnine face, that this was a spirit, not a man. I have speculated since, whether there may 25 have been infection in his mind.

In my turn, I stepped back. But in making the action, I detected in his eyes some latent fear of me. This put the monstrous thought to flight.

“You look at me,” I said, forcing a smile, “as if you had 30 a dread of me.”

“I was doubtful,” he returned, “whether I had seen you before.”

“Where?”

He pointed to the red light he had looked at.

"There?" I said.

Intently watchful of me, he replied (but without sound),  
"Yes."

5 "My good fellow, what should I do there? However, be that as it may, I never was there, you may swear."

"I think I may," he rejoined. "Yes; I am sure I may."

His manner cleared, like my own. He replied to my remarks with readiness, and in well-chosen words. Had he  
10 much to do there? Yes; that was to say, he had enough responsibility to bear; but exactness and watchfulness were what was required of him, and of actual work—manual labor—he had next to none. To change that signal, to trim those lights, and to turn this iron handle now and then,  
15 was all he had to do under that head. Regarding those many long and lonely hours of which I seemed to make so much, he could only say that the routine of his life had shaped itself into that form, and he had grown used to it. He had taught himself a language down here,—if only to  
20 know it by sight, and to have formed his own crude ideas of its pronunciation, could be called learning it. He had also worked at fractions and decimals, and tried a little algebra; but he was, and had been as a boy, a poor hand at figures. Was it necessary for him when on duty always  
25 to remain in that channel of damp air, and could he never rise into the sunshine from between those high stone walls? Why, that depended upon times and circumstances. Under some conditions there would be less upon the Line than under others, and the same held good as to certain hours  
30 of the day and night. In bright weather, he did choose occasions for getting a little above these lower shadows; but, being at all times liable to be called by his electric bell, and at such times listening for it with redoubled anxiety, the relief was less than I would suppose.



He took me into his box, where there was a fire, a desk for an official book in which he had to make certain entries, a telegraphic instrument with its dial, face, and needles, and the little bell of which he had spoken. On my trusting that he would excuse the remark that he had been well educated, and (I hoped I might say without offence), perhaps educated above that station, he observed that instances of slight incongruity in such wise would rarely be found wanting among large bodies of men; that he had heard it was so in workhouses, in the police force, even in that last desperate resource, the army; and that he knew it was so, more or less, in any great railway staff. He had been, when young (if I could believe it, sitting in that hut,—he scarcely could), a student of natural philosophy, and had attended lectures; but he had run wild, misused his opportunities, gone down, and never risen again. He had no complaint to offer about that. He had made his bed, and he lay upon it. It was far too late to make another.

All that I have here condensed he said in a quiet manner, with his grave dark regards divided between me and the fire. He threw in the word, "Sir," from time to time, and especially when he referred to his youth,—as though to request me to understand that he claimed to be nothing but what I found him. He was several times interrupted by the little bell, and had to read off messages, and send replies. Once he had to stand without the door, and display a flag as a train passed, and make some verbal communication to the driver. In the discharge of his duties, I observed him to be remarkably exact and vigilant, breaking off his discourse at a syllable, and remaining silent until what he had to do was done.

In a word, I should have set this man down as one of the safest of men to be employed in that capacity, but for the

circumstance that while he was speaking to me he twice broke off with a fallen color, turned his face towards the little bell when it did NOT ring, opened the door of the hut (which was kept shut to exclude the unhealthy damp), and  
5 looked out towards the red light near the mouth of the tunnel. On both of those occasions, he came back to the fire with the inexplicable air upon him which I had remarked, without being able to define, when we were so far asunder.

10 Said I, when I rose to leave him, "You almost make me think that I have met with a contented man."

(I am afraid I must acknowledge that I said it to lead him on.)

"I believe I used to be so," he rejoined, in the low voice  
15 in which he had first spoken; "but I am troubled, Sir, I am troubled."

He would have recalled the words if he could. He had said them, however, and I took them up quickly.

"With what? What is your trouble?"

20 "It is very difficult to impart, Sir. It is very, very difficult to speak of. If ever you make me another visit, I will try to tell you."

"But I expressly intend to make you another visit. Say, when shall it be?"

25 "I go off early in the morning, and I shall be on again at ten to-morrow night, Sir."

"I will come at eleven."

He thanked me, and went out at the door with me. "I'll show my white light, Sir," he said, in his peculiar low voice,  
30 "till you have found the way up. When you have found it, don't call out! And when you are at the top, don't call out!"

His manner seemed to make the place strike colder to me, but I said no more than, "Very well,"

"And when you come down to-morrow night, don't call out! Let me ask you a parting question. What made you cry, 'Halloa! Below there!' to-night?"

"Heaven knows," said I. "I cried something to that effect——"

5

"Not to that effect, Sir. Those were the very words. I know them well."

"Admit those were the very words. I said them, no doubt, because I saw you below."

"For no other reason?"

10

"What other reason could I possibly have?"

"You had no feeling that they were conveyed to you in any supernatural way?"

"No."

He wished me good night, and held up his light. I 15 walked by the side of the down Line of rails (with a very disagreeable sensation of a train coming behind me) until I found the path. It was easier to mount than to descend, and I got back to my inn without any adventure.

Punctual to my appointment, I placed my foot on the 20 first notch of the zigzag next night, as the distant clocks were striking eleven. He was waiting for me at the bottom, with his white light on. "I have not called out," I said, when we came close together; "may I speak now?" "By all means, Sir." "Good night, then, and here's my 25 hand." "Good night, Sir, and here's mine." With that we walked side by side to his box, entered it, closed the door, and sat down by the fire.

"I have made up my mind, Sir," he began, bending forward as soon as we were seated, and speaking in a tone but 30 a little above a whisper, "that you shall not have to ask me twice what troubles me. I took you for some one else yesterday evening. That troubles me."

"That mistake?"

"No. That some one else."

"Who is it?"

"I don't know."

"Like me?"

5 "I don't know. I never saw the face. The left arm is across the face, and the right arm is waved,—violently waved. This way."

I followed his action with my eyes, and it was the action of an arm gesticulating, with the utmost passion and  
10 vehemence, "For God's sake, clear the way!"

"One moonlight night," said the man, "I was sitting here, when I heard a voice cry, 'Halloa! Below there!' I started up, looked from that door, and saw this Some one else standing by the red light near the tunnel, waving as  
15 I just now showed you. The voice seemed hoarse with shouting, and it cried, 'Look out! Look out!' And then again, 'Halloa! Below there! Look out!' I caught up my lamp, turned it on red, and ran towards the figure, calling, 'What's wrong? What has happened? Where?' It  
20 stood just outside the blackness of the tunnel. I advanced so close upon it that I wondered at its keeping the sleeve across its eyes. I ran right up at it, and had my hand stretched out to pull the sleeve away, when it was gone."

25 "Into the tunnel?" said I.

"No. I ran on into the tunnel, five hundred yards. I stopped, and held my lamp above my head, and saw the figures of the measured distance, and saw the wet stains stealing down the walls and trickling through the arch. I  
30 ran out again faster than I had run in (for I had a mortal abhorrence of the place upon me), and I looked all round the red light with my own red light, and I went up the iron ladder to the gallery atop of it, and I came down again, and ran back here. I telegraphed both ways. 'An alarm has

been given. Is anything wrong?' The answer came back, both ways, 'All well.'"

Resisting the slow touch of a frozen finger tracing out my spine, I showed him how that this figure must be a deception of his sense of sight; and how that figures, originating in disease of the delicate nerves that minister to the functions of the eye, were known to have often troubled patients, some of whom had become conscious of the nature of their affliction, and had even proved it by experiments upon themselves. "As to an imaginary cry," said I, "do but listen for a moment to the wind in this unnatural valley while we speak so low, and to the wild harp it makes of the telegraph wires."

That was all very well, he returned, after we had sat listening for a while, and he ought to know something of the wind and the wires,—he who so often passed long winter nights there, alone and watching. But he would beg to remark that he had not finished.

I asked his pardon, and he slowly added these words, touching my arm,—

"Within six hours after the Appearance, the memorable accident on this Line happened, and within ten hours the dead and wounded were brought along through the tunnel over the spot where the figure had stood."

A disagreeable shudder crept over me, but I did my best against it. It was not to be denied, I rejoined, that this was a remarkable coincidence, calculated deeply to impress his mind. But it was unquestionable that remarkable coincidences did continually occur, and they must be taken into account in dealing with such a subject. Though to be sure I must admit, I added (for I thought I saw that he was going to bring the objection to bear upon me), men of common sense did not allow much for coincidences in making the ordinary calculations of life.

He again begged to remark that he had not finished.

I again begged his pardon for being betrayed into interruptions.

“This,” he said, again laying his hand upon my arm, and  
5 glancing over his shoulder with hollow eyes, “was just a  
year ago. Six or seven months passed, and I had recovered  
from the surprise and shock, when one morning, as the day  
was breaking, I, standing at the door, looked towards the  
red light, and saw the specter again.” He stopped, with a  
10 fixed look at me.

“Did it cry out?”

“No. It was silent.”

“Did it wave its arm?”

“No. It leaned against the shaft of the light, with both  
15 hands before the face. Like this.”

Once more I followed his action with my eyes. It was  
an action of mourning. I have seen such an attitude in  
stone figures on tombs.

“Did you go up to it?”

20 “I came in and sat down, partly to collect my thoughts,  
partly because it had turned me faint. When I went to the  
door again, daylight was above me, and the ghost was  
gone.”

“But nothing followed? Nothing came of this?”

25 He touched me on the arm with his forefinger twice or  
thrice, giving a ghostly nod each time:—

“That very day, as a train came out of the tunnel, I  
noticed, at a carriage window on my side, what looked like  
a confusion of hands and heads, and something waved. I  
30 saw it just in time to signal the driver, Stop! He shut off,  
and put his brake on, but the train drifted past here a hun-  
dred and fifty yards or more. I ran after it, and, as I went  
along, heard terrible screams and cries. A beautiful young  
lady had died instantaneously in one of the compartments,

and was brought in here, and laid down on this floor between us."

Involuntarily I pushed my chair back, as I looked from the boards at which he pointed to himself.

"True, Sir. True. Precisely as it happened, so I tell it 5  
you."

I could think of nothing to say, to any purpose, and my mouth was very dry. The wind and the wires took up the story with a long lamenting wail.

He resumed. "Now, Sir, mark this, and judge how my 10  
mind is troubled. The specter came back a week ago. Ever since, it has been there, now and again, by fits and starts."

"At the light?"

"At the Danger-light." 15

"What does it seem to do?"

He repeated, if possible with increased passion and vehemence, that former gesticulation of "For God's sake, clear the way!"

Then he went on. "I have no peace or rest for it. It 20  
calls to me, for many minutes together, in an agonised manner, 'Below there! Look out! Look out!' It stands waving to me. It rings my little bell——"

I caught at that. "Did it ring your bell yesterday evening when I was here, and you went to the door?" 25

"Twice."

"Why, see," said I, "how your imagination misleads you. My eyes were on the bell, and my ears were open to the bell, and if I am a living man, it did NOT ring at those times. No, nor at any other time, except when it was rung 30  
in the natural course of physical things by the station communicating with you."

He shook his head. "I have never made a mistake as to that yet, Sir. I have never confused the specter's ring

with the man's. The ghost's ring is a strange vibration in the bell that it derives from nothing else, and I have not asserted that the bell stirs to the eye. I don't wonder that you failed to hear it. But *I* heard it."

5 "And did the specter seem to be there, when you looked out?"

"It WAS there."

"Both times?"

He repeated firmly: "Both times."

10 "Will you come to the door with me, and look for it now?"

He bit his under lip as though he were somewhat unwilling, but arose. I opened the door, and stood on the step, while he stood in the doorway. There was the  
15 Danger-light. There was the dismal mouth of the tunnel. There were the high, wet stone walls of the cutting. There were the stars above them.

"Do you see it?" I asked him, taking particular note of his face. His eyes were prominent and strained, but not  
20 very much more so, perhaps, than my own had been when I had directed them earnestly towards the same spot.

"No," he answered. "It is not there."

"Agreed," said I.

We went in again, shut the door, and resumed our seats.  
25 I was thinking how best to improve this advantage, if it might be called one, when he took up the conversation in such a matter-of-course way, so assuming that there could be no serious question of fact between us, that I felt myself placed in the weakest of positions.

30 "By this time you will fully understand, Sir," he said, "that what troubles me so dreadfully is the question, What does the specter mean?"

I was not sure, I told him, that I did fully understand.

"What is its warning against?" he said, ruminating, with



his eyes on the fire, and only by times turning them on me. "What is the danger? Where is the danger? There is danger overhanging somewhere on the Line. Some dreadful calamity will happen. It is not to be doubted this third time, after what has gone before. But surely this is a 5 cruel haunting of *me*. What can *I* do?"

He pulled out his handkerchief, and wiped the drops from his heated forehead.

"If I telegraph Danger, on either side of me, or on both, I can give no reason for it," he went on, wiping the palms 10 of his hands. "I should get into trouble, and do no good. They would think I was mad. This is the way it would work,—Message: 'Danger! Take care!' Answer: 'What Danger? Where?' Message: 'Don't know. But, for 15 God's sake, take care!' They would displace me. What else could they do?"

His pain of mind was most pitiable to see. It was the mental torture of a conscientious man, oppressed beyond 20 endurance by an unintelligible responsibility involving life.

"When it first stood under the Danger-light," he went on, putting his dark hair back from his head, and drawing his hands outward across and across his temples in an extremity of feverish distress, "why not tell me where that accident was to happen,—if it must happen? Why not 25 tell me how it could be averted,—if it could have been averted? When on its second coming it hid its face, why not tell me, instead, 'She is going to die. Let them keep her at home?' If it came, on those two occasions, only to show me that its warnings were true, and so to prepare me for 30 the third, why not warn me plainly now? And I, Lord help me! A mere poor signal-man on this solitary station! Why not go to somebody with credit to be believed, and power to act?"

When I saw him in this state, I saw that for the poor man's sake, as well as for the public safety, what I had to do for the time was to compose his mind. Therefore, setting aside all question of reality or unreality between us, I represented to him that whoever thoroughly discharged his duty must do well, and that at least it was his comfort that he understood his duty, though he did not understand these confounding Appearances. In this effort I succeeded far better than in the attempt to reason him out of his conviction. He became calm; the occupations incidental to his post as the night advanced began to make larger demands on his attention: and I left him at two in the morning. I had offered to stay through the night, but he would not hear of it.

That I more than once looked back at the red light as I ascended the pathway, that I did not like the red light, and that I should have slept but poorly if my bed had been under it, I see no reason to conceal. Nor did I like the two sequences of the accident and the dead girl. I see no reason to conceal that either.

But what ran most in my thoughts was the consideration how ought I to act, having become the recipient of this disclosure? I had proved the man to be intelligent, vigilant, painstaking, and exact; but how long might he remain so, in his state of mind? Though in a subordinate position, still he held a most important trust, and would I (for instance) like to stake my own life on the chances of his continuing to execute it with precision?

Unable to overcome a feeling that there would be something treacherous in my communicating what he had told me to his superiors in the Company, without first being plain with himself and proposing a middle course to him, I ultimately resolved to offer to accompany him (otherwise keeping his secret for the present) to the wisest medical

practitioner we could hear of in those parts, and to take his opinion. A change in his time of duty would come round next night, he had apprised me, and he would be off an hour or two after sunrise, and on again soon after sunset. I had appointed to return accordingly. 5

Next evening was a lovely evening, and I walked out early to enjoy it. The sun was not yet quite down when I traversed the field-path near the top of the deep cutting. I would extend my walk for an hour, I said to myself, half an hour on and half an hour back, and it would then be 10 time to go to my signal-man's box.

Before pursuing my stroll, I stepped to the brink, and mechanically looked down, from the point from which I had first seen him. I cannot describe the thrill that seized upon me, when, close at the mouth of the tunnel, I saw 15 the appearance of a man, with his left sleeve across his eyes, passionately waving his right arm.

The nameless horror that oppressed me passed in a moment, for in a moment I saw that this appearance of a man was a man indeed, and that there was a little group 20 of other men, standing at a short distance, to whom he seemed to be rehearsing the gesture he made. The Danger-light was not yet lighted. Against its shaft, a little low hut, entirely new to me, had been made of some wooden supports and tarpaulin. It looked no bigger than 25 a bed.

With an irresistible sense that something was wrong,—with a flashing self-reproachful fear that fatal mischief had come of my leaving the man there, and causing no one to be sent to overlook or correct what he did,—I descended 30 the notched path with all the speed I could make.

“What is the matter?” I asked the men.

“Signal-man killed this morning, Sir.”

“Not the man belonging to that box?”

"Yes, Sir."

"Not the man I know?"

"You will recognize him, Sir, if you knew him," said the man who spoke for the others, solemnly uncovering his  
5 own head, and raising an end of the tarpaulin, "for his face is quite composed."

"O, how did this happen, how did this happen?" I asked, turning from one to another as the hut closed in again.

10 "He was cut down by an engine, Sir. No man in England knew his work better. But somehow he was not clear of the outer rail. It was just at broad day. He had struck the light, and had the lamp in his hand. As the engine came out of the tunnel, his back was towards her, and she  
15 cut him down. That man drove her, and was showing how it happened. Show the gentleman, Tom."

The man, who wore a rough dark dress, stepped back to his former place at the mouth of the tunnel.

"Coming round the curve in the tunnel, Sir," he said,  
20 "I saw him at the end, like as if I saw him down a perspective-glass. There was no time to check speed, and I knew him to be very careful. As he didn't seem to take heed of the whistle, I shut it off when we were running down upon him, and called to him as loud as I could call."

25 "What did you say?"

"I said, 'Below there! Look out! Look out! For God's sake, clear the way!'"

I started.

30 "Ah! it was a dreadful time, Sir. I never left off calling to him. I put this arm before my eyes not to see, and I waved this arm to the last; but it was no use."

Without prolonging the narrative to dwell on any one of its curious circumstances more than on any other, I

may, in closing it, point out the coincidence that the warning of the Engine-Driver included, not only the words which the unfortunate Signal-man had repeated to me as haunting him, but also the words which I myself—not he—had attached, and that only in my own mind, to the gesticulation he had imitated. 5

# THE LADY, OR THE TIGER?<sup>1</sup>

By FRANK STOCKTON

IN the very olden time, there lived a semi-barbaric king, whose ideas, though somewhat polished and sharpened by the progressiveness of distant Latin neighbors, were still large, florid, and untrammelled, as became the  
5 half of him which was barbaric. He was a man of exuberant fancy, and, withal, of an authority so irresistible that, at his will, he turned his varied fancies into facts. He was greatly given to self-communing; and, when he and himself agreed upon anything, the thing was done. When  
10 every member of his domestic and political systems moved smoothly in its appointed course, his nature was bland and genial; but whenever there was a little hitch, and some of his orbs got out of their orbits, he was blander and more genial still, for nothing pleased him so much as to make the  
15 crooked straight, and crush down uneven places.

Among the borrowed notions by which his barbarism had become semified was that of the public arena, which, by exhibitions of manly and beastly valor, the  
minds of his subjects were refined and cultured.

20 But even here the exuberant and barbaric fancy asserted itself. The arena of the king was built, not to give the people an opportunity of hearing the rhapsodies of dying gladiators, nor to enable them to view the inevitable conclusion of a conflict between religious opinions and  
25 hungry jaws, but for purposes far better adapted to widen and develop the mental energies of the people. This vast

<sup>1</sup> From "The Lady, or the Tiger and Other Stories"; copyright, 1884, 1907, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by permission.

amphitheater, with its encircling galleries, its mysterious vaults, and its unseen passages, ~~was an agent of poetic justice, in which crime was punished, or virtue rewarded, by the decrees of an impartial and incorruptible chance.~~

When a subject was accused of a crime of sufficient importance to interest the king, public notice was given that on an appointed day the fate of the accused person would be decided in the king's arena, ~~a structure which well deserved its name; for, although its form and plan were borrowed from afar, its purpose emanated solely from the brain of this man, who, every barleycorn a king, knew no tradition to which he owed more allegiance than pleased his fancy, and who ingrafted on every adopted form of human thought and action the rich growth of his barbaric idealism.~~

When all the people had assembled in the galleries, and the king, surrounded by his court, sat high up on his throne of royal state on one side of the arena, he gave a signal, a door beneath him opened, and the accused subject stepped out into the amphitheater. Directly opposite him, on the other side of the enclosed space, were two doors, exactly alike and side by side. It was the duty and the privilege of the person on trial, to walk directly to these doors and open one of them. ~~He could open either door he pleased: he was subject to no guidance or influence but that of the aforementioned impartial and incorruptible chance.~~ If he opened the one, there came out of it a hungry tiger, the fiercest and most cruel that could be procured, which immediately sprang upon him, and tore him to pieces, as a punishment for his guilt. The moment that the case of the criminal was thus decided, doleful iron bells were clanged, great wails went up from the hired mourners posted on the outer rim of the arena, and the vast audience, with bowed heads and downcast hearts, wended slowly

their homeward way, mourning greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have merited so dire a fate.

But, if the accused person opened the other door, there came forth from it a lady, the most suitable to his years and station that his majesty could select among his fair subjects; and to this lady he was immediately married, as a reward of his innocence. ~~It mattered not that he might already possess a wife and family, or that his affections might be engaged upon an object of his own selection: the king allowed no such subordinate arrangements to interfere with his great scheme of retribution and reward.~~ The exercises, as in the other instance, took place immediately, and in the arena. Another door opened beneath the king, and a priest, followed by a band of choristers, and dancing maidens blowing joyous airs on golden horns and treading an epithalamic measure, advanced to where the pair stood, side by side; and the wedding was promptly and cheerily solemnized. Then the gay brass bells rang forth their merry peals, the people shouted glad hurrahs, and the innocent man, preceded by children strewing flowers on his path, led his bride to his home.

This was the king's semi-barbaric method of administering justice. Its perfect fairness is obvious. The criminal could not know out of which door would come the lady: he opened either he pleased, without having the slightest idea whether, in the next instant, he was to be devoured or married. On some occasions the tiger came out of one door, and on some out of the other. The decisions of this tribunal were not only fair, they were positively determinate: the accused person was instantly punished if he found himself guilty; and, if innocent, he was rewarded on the spot, whether he liked it or not. There was no escape from the judgments of the king's arena.



The institution was a very popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days, they never knew whether they were to witness a bloody slaughter or a hilarious wedding. This element of uncertainty lent an interest to the occasion which it could not otherwise have attained. Thus, the masses were entertained and pleased, and the thinking part of the community could bring no charge of unfairness against this plan; for did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands? 5 10

This semi-barbaric king had a daughter as ~~blooming as~~ his most florid fancies, and with a soul as fervent and imperious as his own. As is usual in such cases, she was the apple of his eye, and was loved by him above all humanity. Among his courtiers was a young man of that fineness of blood and lowness of station common to the conventional heroes of romance who love royal maidens. This royal maiden was well satisfied with her lover, for he was handsome and brave to a degree unsurpassed in all this kingdom; and she loved him with an ardor that had enough of barbarism in it to make it exceedingly warm and strong. This love affair moved on happily for many months, until one day the king happened to discover its existence. He did not hesitate nor waver in regard to his duty in the premises. The youth was immediately cast into prison, 15 25 and a day was appointed for his trial in the king's arena. This, of course, was an especially important occasion; and his majesty, as well as all the people, was greatly interested in the workings and development of this trial. Never before had such a case occurred; never before had a subject dared to love the daughter of a king. In after-years such things became commonplace enough, but then they were, in no slight degree, novel and startling. 30

The tiger-cages of the kingdom were searched for the

most savage and relentless beasts, from which the fiercest monster might be selected for the arena; and the ranks of maiden youth and beauty throughout the land were carefully surveyed by competent judges, in order that the  
5 young man might have a fitting bride in case fate did not determine for him a different destiny. Of course, everybody knew that the deed with which the accused was charged had been done. He had loved the princess, and neither he, she, nor any one else thought of denying the  
10 fact; but the king would not think of allowing any fact of this kind to interfere with the workings of the tribunal, in which he took such great delight and satisfaction. No matter how the affair turned out, the youth would be disposed of; and the king would take an æsthetic pleasure  
15 in watching the course of events, which would determine whether or not the young man had done wrong in allowing himself to love the princess.

The appointed day arrived. ~~From far and near the people gathered, and thronged the great galleries of the arena; and crowds, unable to gain admittance, massed themselves against its outside walls. The king and his court were in their places, opposite the twin doors, those fateful portals, so terrible in their similarity.~~

All was ready. The signal was given. A door beneath  
25 the royal party opened, and the lover of the princess walked into the arena. Tall, beautiful, fair, his appearance was greeted with a low hum of admiration and anxiety. Half the audience had not known so grand a youth had lived among them. No wonder the princess  
30 loved him! ~~What a terrible thing for him to be there!~~

As the youth advanced into the arena, he turned, as the custom was, to bow to the king; but he did not think at all of that royal personage; his eyes were fixed upon the princess, who sat to the right of her father. ~~Had it not~~

been for the moiety of barbarism in her nature, it is probable that lady would not have been there; but her intense and fervid soul would not allow her to be absent on an occasion in which she was so terribly interested. From the moment that the decree had gone forth, that her lover should decide his fate in the king's arena, she had thought of nothing, night or day, but this great event and the various subjects connected with it. Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than any one who had ever before been interested in such a case, she had done what no other person had done,—she had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. She knew in which of the two rooms, that lay behind those doors, stood the cage of the tiger, with its open front, and in which waited the lady. Through these thick doors, heavily curtained with skins on the inside, it was impossible that any noise or suggestion should come from within to the person who should approach to raise the latch of one of them; but gold, and the power of a woman's will, had brought the secret to the princess.

And not only did she know in which room stood the lady ready to emerge, all blushing and radiant, should her door be opened, but she knew who the lady was. It was one of the fairest and loveliest of the damsels of the court who had been selected as the reward of the accused youth, should he be proved innocent of the crime of aspiring to one so far above him; and the princess hated her. Often had she seen, or imagined that she had seen, this fair creature throwing glances of admiration upon the person of her lover, and sometimes she thought these glances were perceived and even returned. Now and then she had seen them talking together; it was but for a moment or two, but much can be said in a brief space; it may have been on most unimportant topics, but how could she know that?

The girl was lovely, but she had dared to raise her eyes to the loved one of the princess; and, with all the intensity of the savage blood transmitted to her through long lines of wholly barbaric ancestors, she hated the woman who  
 5 ~~blushed and trembled behind that silent door.~~

When her lover turned and looked at her, and ~~his eye met hers as she sat there paler and whiter than any one in the vast ocean of anxious faces about her~~ he saw, by that power of quick perception, which is given to those  
 10 ~~whose souls are one,~~ that she knew behind which door crouched the tiger, and behind which stood the lady. ~~He had expected her to know it.~~ He understood her nature, and his soul was assured that she would never rest until she had made plain to herself this thing, hidden to all other  
 15 lookers-on, even to the king. ~~The only hope for the youth in which there was any element of certainty was based upon the success of the princess in discovering this mystery; and the moment he looked upon her, he saw she had succeeded, as in his soul he knew she would suc-~~  
 20 ~~ceed.~~

Then it was that his quick and anxious glance asked the question: "Which?" It was as plain to her as if he shouted it from where he stood. There was not an instant to be lost. The question was asked in a flash; it must be  
 25 answered in another.

Her right arm lay on the cushioned parapet before her. She raised her hand, and made a slight, quick movement toward the right. No one but her lover saw her. ~~(Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena)~~  
 30 He turned, and with a firm and rapid step he walked across the empty space. Every heart stopped beating, every breath was held, every eye was fixed immovably upon that man. Without the slightest hesitation, he went to the door on the right, and opened it.

Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady?

The more we reflect upon this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart which leads us through devious mazes of passion, out of which it is difficult to find our way. Think of it, fair reader, not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself, but upon that hot-blooded, semi-barbaric princess, her soul at a white heat beneath the combined fires of despair and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him? 5 10

How often, in her waking hours and in her dreams, had she started in wild horror, and covered her face with her hands as she thought of her lover opening the door, on the other side of which waited the cruel fangs of the tiger! 15

But how much oftener had she seen him at the other door! ~~How in her grievous reveries had she gnashed her teeth, and torn her hair, when she saw his start of rapturous delight as he opened the door of the lady!~~ How her soul had burned in agony when she had seen him rush to meet that woman, with her flushing cheek and sparkling eye of triumph; when she had seen him lead her forth, his whole frame kindled with the joy of recovered life; when she had heard the glad shouts from the multitude, and the wild ringing of the happy bells; when she had seen the priest, with his joyous followers, advance to the couple, and make them man and wife before her very eyes; and when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the tremendous shouts of the hilarious multitude, in which her one despairing shriek was lost and drowned! 20 25 30

Would it not be better for him to die at once, and go to wait for her in the blessed regions of semi-barbaric futurity?

And yet, that awful tiger, those shrieks, that blood!

~~Her decision had been indicated in an instant, but it had been made after days and nights of anguished deliberation.~~

She had known she would be asked, she had decided what  
5 she would answer, and, without the slightest hesitation,  
she had moved her hand to the right.

[~~The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered, and it is not for me to presume to set myself up as the one person able to answer it.~~] And so I leave it  
10 with all of you: Which came out of the opened door,—the  
lady, or the tiger?

## THE THREE STRANGERS

By THOMAS HARDY

AMONG the few features of agricultural England which retain an appearance but little modified by the lapse of centuries, may be reckoned the high, grassy and furzy downs, coombs, or ewe-leases, as they are indifferently called, that fill a large area of certain counties in the south and south-west. If any mark of human occupation is met with hereon, it usually takes the form of the solitary cottage of some shepherd.

Fifty years ago such a lonely cottage stood on such a down, and may possibly be standing there now. In spite of its loneliness, however, the spot, by actual measurement, was not more than five miles from a county-town. Yet that affected it little. Five miles of irregular upland, during the long inimical seasons, with their sleets, snows, rains, and mists, afford withdrawing space enough to isolate a Timon or a Nebuchadnezzar; much less, in fair weather, to please that less repellent tribe, the poets, philosophers, artists, and others who "conceive and meditate of pleasant things."

Some old earthen camp or barrow, some clump of trees, at least some starved fragment of ancient hedge is usually taken advantage of in the erection of these forlorn dwellings. But, in the present case, such a kind of shelter had been disregarded. Higher Crowstairs, as the house was called, stood quite detached and undefended. The only reason for its precise situation seemed to be the crossing of two footpaths at right angles hard by, which may have crossed there and thus for a good five hundred years.

But the house was exposed to the elements on all sides. But, though the wind up here blew unmistakably when it did blow, and the rain hit hard whenever it fell, the various weathers of the winter season were not quite so formidable on the coomb as they were imagined to be by dwellers on low ground. The raw rimes were not so pernicious as in the hollows, and the frosts were scarcely so severe. When the shepherd and his family who tenanted the house were pitied for their sufferings from the exposure, they said that upon the whole they were less inconvenienced by "wuzzes and flames" (hoarses and phlegms) than when they had lived by the stream of a snug neighboring valley.

The night of March 28, 182—, was precisely one of the nights that were wont to call forth these expressions of commiseration. The level rainstorm smote walls, slopes, and hedges like the clothyard shafts of Senlac and Crecy. Such sheep and outdoor animals as had no shelter stood with their buttocks to the winds; while the tails of little birds trying to roost on some scraggy thorn were blown inside-out like umbrellas. The gable-end of the cottage was stained with wet, and the eavesdroppings flapped against the wall. Yet never was commiseration for the shepherd more misplaced. For that cheerful rustic was entertaining a large party in glorification of the christening of his second girl.

The guests had arrived before the rain began to fall, and they were all now assembled in the chief or living room of the dwelling. A glance into the apartment at eight o'clock on this eventful evening would have resulted in the opinion that it was as cosy and comfortable a nook as could be wished for in boisterous weather. The calling of its inhabitant was proclaimed by a number of highly-polished sheep-crooks without stems that were hung ornamentally over the fireplace, the curl of each shining crook varying



from the antiquated type engraved in the patriarchal pictures of old family Bibles to the most approved fashion of the last local sheep-fair. The room was lighted by half-a-dozen candles, having wicks only a trifle smaller than the grease which enveloped them, in candlesticks that were never used but at high-days, holy-days and family feasts. The lights were scattered about the room, two of them standing on the chimney-piece. This position of candles was in itself significant. Candles on the chimney-piece always meant a party.

On the hearth, in front of a back-brand to give substance, blazed a fire of thorns, that crackled "like the laughter of the fool."

Nineteen persons were gathered here. Of these, five women, wearing gowns of various bright hues, sat in chairs along the wall; girls shy and not shy filled the window-bench; four men, including Charley Jake the hedge-carpenter, Elijah New the parish-clerk, and John Pitcher, a neighboring dairyman, the shepherd's father-in-law, lolled in the settle; a young man and maid, who were blushing over tentative *pourparlers* on a life-companionship, sat beneath the corner-cupboard; and an elderly engaged man of fifty or upward moved restlessly about from spots where his betrothed was not to the spot where she was. Enjoyment was pretty general, and so much the more prevailed in being unhampered by conventional restrictions. Absolute confidence in each other's good opinion begat perfect ease, while the finishing stroke of manner, amounting to a truly princely serenity, was lent to the majority by the absence of any expression or trait denoting that they wished to get on in the world, enlarge their minds, or do any eclipsing thing whatever—which nowadays so generally nips the bloom and *bonhomie* of all except the two extremes of the social scale.

Shepherd Fennel had married well, his wife being a dairyman's daughter from a vale at a distance, who brought fifty guineas in her pocket—and kept them there, till they should be required for ministering to the needs of a coming  
5 family. This frugal woman had been somewhat exercised as to the character that should be given to the gathering. A sit-still party had its advantages; but an undisturbed position of ease in chairs and settles was apt to lead on the men to such an unconscionable deal of toping that they  
10 would sometimes fairly drink the house dry. A dancing-party was the alternative; but this, while avoiding the foregoing objection on the score of good drink, had a counterbalancing disadvantage in the matter of good victuals, the ravenous appetites engendered by the exercise  
15 causing immense havoc in the buttery. Shepherdess Fennel fell back upon the intermediate plan of mingling short dances with short periods of talk and singing, so as to hinder any ungovernable rage in either. But this scheme was entirely confined to her own gentle mind: the  
20 shepherd himself was in the mood to exhibit the most reckless phases of hospitality.

The fiddler was a boy of those parts, about twelve years of age, who had a wonderful dexterity in jigs and reels, though his fingers were so small and short as to necessitate  
25 a constant shifting for the high notes, from which he scrambled back to the first position with sounds not of unmixed purity of tone. At seven the shrill tweedle-dee of this youngster had begun, accompanied by a booming ground-bass from Elijah New, the parish-clerk, who had  
30 thoughtfully brought with him his favorite musical instrument, the serpent. Dancing was instantaneous, Mrs. Fennel privately enjoining the players on no account to let the dance exceed the length of a quarter of an hour.

But Elijah and the boy, in the excitement of their posi-

tion, quite forgot the injunction. Moreover, Oliver Giles, a man of seventeen, one of the dancers, who was enamored of his partner, a fair girl of thirty-three rolling years, had recklessly handed a new crown-piece to the musicians, as a bribe to keep going as long as they had muscle and wind. Mrs. Fennel, seeing the steam begin to generate on the countenances of her guests, crossed over and touched the fiddler's elbow and put her hand on the serpent's mouth. But they took no notice, and fearing she might lose her character of genial hostess if she were to interfere too markedly, she retired and sat down helpless. And so the dance whizzed on with cumulative fury, the performers moving in their planet-like courses, direct and retrograde, from apogee to perigee, till the hand of the well-kicked clock at the bottom of the room had traveled over the circumference of an hour.

While these cheerful events were in course of enactment within Fennel's pastoral dwelling, an incident having considerable bearing on the party had occurred in the gloomy night without. Mrs. Fennel's concern about the growing fierceness of the dance corresponded in point of time with the ascent of a human figure to the solitary hill of Higher Crowstairs from the direction of the distant town. This personage strode on through the rain without a pause, following the little-worn path which, further on in its course, skirted the shepherd's cottage.

It was nearly the time of full moon, and on this account, though the sky was lined with a uniform sheet of dripping cloud, ordinary objects out of doors were readily visible. The sad wan light revealed the lonely pedestrian to be a man of supple frame; his gait suggested that he had somewhat passed the period of perfect and instinctive agility, though not so far as to be otherwise than rapid of motion when occasion required. At a rough guess, he might have

been about forty years of age. He appeared tall, but a recruiting sergeant, or other person accustomed to the judging of men's heights by the eye, would have discerned that this was chiefly owing to his gauntness, and that he  
5 was not more than five-feet-eight or nine.

Notwithstanding the regularity of his tread, there was caution in it, as in that of one who mentally feels his way; and despite the fact that it was not a black coat nor a dark garment of any sort that he wore, there was something  
10 about him which suggested that he naturally belonged to the black-coated tribes of men. His clothes were of fustian, and his boots hobnailed, yet in his progress he showed not the mud-accustomed bearing of hobnailed and fustianed peasantry.

15 By the time that he had arrived abreast of the shepherd's premises the rain came down, or rather came along, with yet more determined violence. The outskirts of the little settlement partially broke the force of wind and rain, and this induced him to stand still. The most salient of the  
20 shepherd's domestic erections was an empty sty at the forward corner of his hedgeless garden, for in these latitudes the principle of masking the homelier features of your establishment by a conventional frontage was unknown. The traveler's eye was attracted to this small building by  
25 the pallid shine of the wet slates that covered it. He turned aside, and, finding it empty, stood under the pent-roof for shelter.

While he stood, the boom of the serpent within the adjacent house, and the lesser strains of the fiddler, reached  
30 the spot as an accompaniment to the surging hiss of the flying rain on the sod, its louder beating on the cabbage-leaves of the garden, on the eight or ten beehives just discernible by the path, and its dripping from the eaves into a row of buckets and pans that had been placed under the

walls of the cottage. For at Higher Crowstairs, as at all such elevated domiciles, the grand difficulty of housekeeping was an insufficiency of water; and a casual rainfall was utilized by turning out, as catchers, every utensil that the house contained. Some queer stories might be told of the contrivances for economy in suds and dish-waters that are absolutely necessitated in upland habitations during the droughts of summer. But at this season there were no such exigencies; a mere acceptance of what the skies bestowed was sufficient for an abundant store.

At last the notes of the serpent ceased and the house was silent. This cessation of activity aroused the solitary pedestrian from the reverie into which he had lapsed, and, emerging from the shed, with an apparently new intention, he walked up the path to the house-door. Arrived here, his first act was to kneel down on a large stone beside the row of vessels, and to drink a copious draught from one of them. Having quenched his thirst he rose and lifted his hand to knock, but paused with his eye upon the panel. Since the dark surface of the wood revealed absolutely nothing, it was evident that he must be mentally looking through the door, as if he wished to measure thereby all the possibilities that a house of this sort might include, and how they might bear upon the question of his entry.

In his indecision he turned and surveyed the scene around. Not a soul was anywhere visible. The garden-path stretched downward from his feet, gleaming like the track of a snail; the roof of the little well (mostly dry), the well-cover, the top rail of the garden-gate, were varnished with the same dull liquid glaze; while, far away in the vale, a faint whiteness of more than usual extent showed that the rivers were high in the meads. Beyond all this winked a few bleared lamplights through the beating drops—lights that denoted the situation of the county-town from which

he had appeared to come. The absence of all notes of life in that direction seemed to clinch his intentions, and he knocked at the door.

Within, a desultory chat had taken the place of movement and musical sound. The hedge-carpenter was suggesting a song to the company, which nobody just then was inclined to undertake, so that the knock afforded a not unwelcome diversion.

"Walk in!" said the shepherd promptly.

10 The latch clicked upward, and out of the night our pedestrian appeared upon the door-mat. The shepherd arose, snuffed two of the nearest candles, and turned to look at him.

Their light disclosed that the stranger was dark in complexion and not unprepossessing as to feature. His hat, which for a moment he did not remove, hung low over his eyes, without concealing that they were large, open, and determined, moving with a flash rather than a glance round the room. He seemed pleased with his survey, and, 15 baring his shaggy head, said, in a rich deep voice, "The rain is so heavy, friends, that I ask leave to come in and rest awhile."

"To be sure, stranger," said the shepherd. "And fait<sup>1</sup>., you've been lucky in choosing your time, for we are having a bit of a fling for a glad cause—though, to be sure, 25 a man could hardly wish that glad cause to happen more than once a year."

"Nor less," spoke up a woman. "For 'tis best to get your family over and done with, as soon as you can, so 30 as to be all the earlier out of the fag o't."

"And what may be this glad cause?" asked the stranger.

"A birth and christening," said the shepherd.

The stranger hoped his host might not be made unhappy either by too many or too few of such episodes, and being

invited by a gesture to a pull at the mug, he readily acquiesced. His manner, which, before entering, had been so dubious, was now altogether that of a careless and candid man.

"Late to be traipsing athwart this coomb—hey?" said 5 the engaged man of fifty.

"Late it is, master, as you say.—I'll take a seat in the chimney-corner, if you have nothing to urge against it, ma'am; for I am a little moist on the side that was next the rain."

10

Mrs. Shepherd Fennel assented, and made room for the self-invited comer, who, having got completely inside the chimney-corner, stretched out his legs and his arms with the expansiveness of a person quite at home.

"Yes, I am rather cracked in the vamp," he said freely, 15 seeing that the eyes of the shepherd's wife fell upon his boots, "and I am not well fitted either. I have had some rough times lately, and have been forced to pick up what I can get in the way of wearing, but I must find a suit better fit for working-days when I reach home."

20

"One of hereabouts?" she inquired.

"Not quite that—further up the country."

"I thought so. And so be I; and by your tongue you come from my neighborhood."

"But you would hardly have heard of me," he said 25 quickly. "My time would be long before yours, ma'am, you see."

This testimony to the youthfulness of his hostess had the effect of stopping her cross-examination.

"There is only one thing more wanted to make me 30 happy," continued the new-comer. "And that is a little baccy, which I am sorry to say I am out of."

"I'll fill your pipe," said the shepherd.

"I must ask you to lend me a pipe likewise."

"A smoker, and no pipe about 'ee?"

"I have dropped it somewhere on the road."

The shepherd filled and handed him a new clay pipe, saying, as he did so, "Hand me your baccy-box—I'll fill  
5 that too, now I am about it."

The man went through the movement of searching his pockets.

"Lost that too?" said his entertainer, with some surprise.

10 "I am afraid so," said the man with some confusion. "Give it to me in a screw of paper." Lighting his pipe at the candle with a suction that drew the whole flame into the bowl, he resettled himself in the corner and bent his looks upon the faint steam from his damp legs, as if he  
15 wished to say no more.

Meanwhile the general body of guests had been taking little notice of this visitor by reason of an absorbing discussion in which they were engaged with the band about a tune for the next dance. The matter being settled, they  
20 were about to stand up when an interruption came in the shape of another knock at the door.

At sound of the same the man in the chimney-corner took up the poker and began stirring the brands as if doing it thoroughly were the one aim of his existence; and  
25 a second time the shepherd said, "Walk in!" In a moment another man stood upon the straw-woven door-mat. He too was a stranger.

This individual was one of a type radically different from the first. There was more of the commonplace in  
30 his manner, and a certain jovial cosmopolitanism sat upon his features. He was several years older than the first arrival, his hair being slightly frosted, his eyebrows bristly, and his whiskers cut back from his cheeks. His face was rather full and flabby, and yet it was not altogether a face



without power. A few grog-blossoms marked the neighborhood of his nose. He flung back his long drab great-coat, revealing that beneath it he wore a suit of cinder-gray shade throughout, large heavy seals, of some metal or other that would take a polish, dangling from his fob as his only personal ornament. Shaking the water-drops from his low-crowned glazed hat, he said, "I must ask for a few minutes' shelter, comrades, or I shall be wetted to my skin before I get to Casterbridge."

"Make yourself at home, master," said the shepherd, perhaps a trifle less heartily than on the first occasion. Not that Fennel had the least tinge of niggardliness in his composition; but the room was far from large, spare chairs were not numerous, and damp companions were not altogether desirable at close quarters for the women and girls in their bright-colored gowns.

However, the second comer, after taking off his great-coat, and hanging his hat on a nail in one of the ceiling-beams as if he had been specially invited to put it there, advanced and sat down at the table. This had been pushed so closely into the chimney-corner, to give all available room to the dancers, that its inner edge grazed the elbow of the man who had ensconced himself by the fire; and thus the two strangers were brought into close companionship. They nodded to each other by way of breaking the ice of unacquaintance, and the first stranger handed his neighbor the family mug—a huge vessel of brown ware, having its upper edge worn away like a threshold by the rub of whole generations of thirsty lips that had gone the way of all flesh, and bearing the following inscription burnt upon its rotund side in yellow letters:—

THERE IS NO FUN  
UNTILL i CUM.

The other man, nothing loth, raised the mug to his lips, and drank on, and on, and on—till a curious blueness overspread the countenance of the shepherd's wife, who had regarded with no little surprise the first stranger's  
5 free offer to the second of what did not belong to him to dispense.

"I knew it!" said the toper to the shepherd with much satisfaction. "When I walked up your garden before coming in, and saw the hives all of a row, I said to myself,  
10 'Where there's bees there's honey, and where there's honey there's mead.' But mead of such a truly comfortable sort as this I really didn't expect to meet in my older days." He took yet another pull at the mug, till it assumed an ominous elevation.

15 "Glad you enjoy it!" said the shepherd warmly.

"It is goodish mead," assented Mrs. Fennel, with an absence of enthusiasm which seemed to say that it was possible to buy praise for one's cellar at too heavy a price. "It is trouble enough to make—and really I hardly think  
20 we shall make any more. For honey sells well, and we ourselves can make shift with a drop o' small mead and metheglin for common use from the comb-washings."

"O, but you'll never have the heart!" reproachfully cried the stranger in cinder-gray, after taking up the mug  
25 a third time and setting it down empty. "I love mead, when 'tis old like this, as I love to go to church o' Sundays, or to relieve the needy any day of the week."

"Ha, ha, ha!" said the man in the chimney-corner, who in spite of the taciturnity induced by the pipe of tobacco,  
30 could not or would not refrain from this slight testimony to his comrade's humor.

Now the old mead of those days, brewed of the purest first-year or maiden honey, four pounds to the gallon—with its due complement of white of eggs, cinnamon, gin-

ger, cloves, mace, rosemary, yeast, and processes of working, bottling, and cellaring—tasted remarkably strong; but it did not taste so strong as it actually was. Hence, presently, the stranger in cinder-gray at the table, moved by its creeping influence, unbuttoned his waistcoat, threw himself back in his chair, spread his legs, and made his presence felt in various ways. 5

“Well, well, as I say,” he resumed, “I am going to Casterbridge, and to Casterbridge I must go. I should have been almost there by this time; but the rain drove me into your dwelling, and I’m not sorry for it.” 10

“You don’t live in Casterbridge?” said the shepherd.

“Not as yet; though I shortly mean to move there.”

“Going to set up in trade, perhaps?”

“No, no,” said the shepherd’s wife. “It is easy to see that the gentleman is rich, and don’t want to work at anything.” 15

The cinder-gray stranger paused, as if to consider whether he would accept that definition of himself. He presently rejected it by answering, “Rich is not quite the word for me, dame. I do work, and I must work. And even if I only get to Casterbridge by midnight I must begin work there at eight to-morrow morning. Yes, het or wet, blow or snow, famine or sword, my day’s work to-morrow must be done.” 25

“Poor man! Then, in spite o’ seeming, you be worse off than we?” replied the shepherd’s wife.

“’Tis the nature of my trade, men and maidens. ’Tis the nature of my trade more than my poverty. . . . But really and truly I must up and off, or I shan’t get a lodging in the town.” However, the speaker did not move, and directly added, “There’s time for one more draught of friendship before I go; and I’d perform it at once if the mug were not dry.” 30

"Here's a mug o' small," said Mrs. Fennel. "Small, we call it, though to be sure 'tis only the first wash o' the combs."

"No," said the stranger disdainfully. "I won't spoil  
5 your first kindness by partaking o' your second."

"Certainly not," broke in Fennel. "We don't increase and multiply every day, and I'll fill the mug again." He went away to the dark place under the stairs where the barrel stood. The shepherdess followed him.

10 "Why should you do this?" she said reproachfully, as soon as they were alone. "He's emptied it oncē, though it held enough for ten people; and now he's not contented wi' the small, but must needs call for more o' the strong! And a stranger unbeknown to any of us. For my part, I  
15 don't like the look o' the man at all."

"But he's in the house, my honey; and 'tis a wet night, and a christening. Daze it, what's a cup of mead more or less? There'll be plenty more next bee-burning."

"Very well—this time, then," she answered, looking  
20 wistfully at the barrel. "But what is the man's calling, and where is he one of, that he should come in and join us like this?"

"I don't know. I'll ask him again."

The catastrophe of having the mug drained dry at one  
25 pull by the stranger in cinder-gray was effectually guarded against this time by Mrs. Fennel. She poured out his allowance in a small cup, keeping the large one at a discreet distance from him. When he had tossed off his portion the shepherd renewed his inquiry about the stranger's  
30 occupation.

The latter did not immediately reply, and the man in the chimney-corner, with sudden demonstrativeness, said, "Anybody may know my trade—I'm a wheelwright."

"A very good trade for these parts," said the shepherd.

"And anybody may know mine—if they've the sense to find it out," said the stranger in cinder-gray.

"You may generally tell what a man is by his claws," observed the hedge-carpenter, looking at his own hands. 5  
"My fingers be as full of thorns as an old pin-cushion is of pins."

The hands of the man in the chimney-corner instinctively sought the shade, and he gazed into the fire as he resumed his pipe. The man at the table took up the hedge- 10  
carpenter's remark, and added smartly, "True; but the oddity of my trade is that, instead of setting a mark upon me, it sets a mark upon my customers."

No observation being offered by anybody in elucidation of this enigma, the shepherd's wife once more called for a 15  
song. The same obstacles presented themselves as at the former time—one had no voice, another had forgotten the first verse. The stranger at the table, whose soul had now risen to a good working temperature, relieved the difficulty by exclaiming that, to start the company, he 20  
would sing himself. Thrusting one thumb into the arm-hole of his waistcoat, he waved the other hand in the air, and, with an extemporizing gaze at the shining sheep-crooks above the mantelpiece, began:—

"O my trade it is the rarest one, 25  
Simple shepherds all—  
My trade is a sight to see;  
For my customers I tie, and take them up on high,  
And waft 'em to a far countree!"

The room was silent when he had finished the verse—with 30  
one exception, that of the man in the chimney-corner, who, at the singer's word, "Chorus!" joined him in a deep bass voice of musical relish—

"And waft 'em to a far countree!"

Oliver Giles, John Pitcher the dairyman, the parish-clerk, the engaged man of fifty, the row of young women against the wall, seemed lost in thought not of the gayest kind. The shepherd looked meditatively on the ground, the shepherdess gazed keenly at the singer. and with some suspicion; she was doubting whether this stranger were merely singing an old song from recollection, or was composing one there and then for the occasion. All were as perplexed at the obscure revelation as the guests at Belshazzar's Feast, except the man in the chimney-corner, who quietly said, "Second verse, stranger," and smoked on.

The singer thoroughly moistened himself from his lips inwards, and went on with the next stanza as requested:—

15                    "My tools are but common ones,  
                               Simple shepherds all—  
                               My tools are no sight to see:  
                               A little hempen string, and a post whereon to swing,  
                               Are implements enough for me!"

20 Shepherd Fennel glanced round. There was no longer any doubt that the stranger was answering his question rhythmically. The guests one and all started back with suppressed exclamations. The young woman engaged to the man of fifty fainted half-way, and would have proceeded, but finding him wanting in alacrity for catching her she sat down trembling.

"O, he's the ——!" whispered the people in the background, mentioning the name of an ominous public officer. "He's come to do it! 'Tis to be at Casterbridge jail to-morrow—the man for sheep-stealing—the poor clock-maker we heard of, who used to live away at Shottsford and had no work to do—Timothy Summers, whose family were a-starving, and so he went out of Shottsford by the high-

road, and took a sheep in open daylight defying the farmer and the farmer's wife and the farmer's lad, and every man jack among 'em. He" (and they nodded towards the stranger of the deadly trade) "is come from up the country to do it because there's not enough to do in his own 5 county-town, and he's got the place here now our own county man's dead; he's going to live in the same cottage under the prison wall."

The stranger in cinder-gray took no notice of this whispered string of observations, but again wetted his lips. \* 10 Seeing that his friend in the chimney-corner was the only one who reciprocated his joviality in any way, he held out his cup towards that appreciative comrade, who also held out his own. They clinked together, the eyes of the rest of the room hanging upon the singer's actions. He parted 15 his lips for the third verse; but at that moment another knock was audible upon the door. This time the knock was faint and hesitating.

The company seemed scared; the shepherd looked with consternation towards the entrance, and it was with some 20 effort that he resisted his alarmed wife's deprecatory glance, and uttered for the third time the welcoming words "Walk in!"

The door was gently opened, and another man stood upon the mat. He, like those who had preceded him, was a 25 stranger. This time it was a short, small personage, of fair complexion, and dressed in a decent suit of dark clothes.

"Can you tell me the way to——?" he began: when, gazing round the room to observe the nature of the com- 30 pany amongst whom he had fallen, his eyes lighted on the stranger in cinder-gray. It was just at the instant when the latter, who had thrown his mind into his song with such a will that he scarcely heeded the interruption,

silenced all whispers and inquiries by bursting into his third verse:—

“To-morrow is my working day,  
Simple shepherds all—  
5 To-morrow is a working day for me:  
For the farmer’s sheep is slain, and the lad who did it ta’en,  
And on his soul may God ha’ merc-y!”

The stranger in the chimney-corner, waving cups with the singer so heartily that his mead splashed over on the  
10 hearth, repeated in his bass voice as before:—

“And on his soul may God ha’ merc-y!”

All this time the third stranger had been standing in the doorway. Finding now that he did not come forward or go on speaking, the guests particularly regarded him. They  
15 noticed to their surprise that he stood before them the picture of abject terror—his knees trembling, his hand shaking so violently that the door-latch by which he supported himself rattled audibly: his white lips were parted, and his eyes fixed on the merry officer of justice in the  
20 middle of the room. A moment more and he had turned, closed the door, and fled.

“What a man can it be?” said the shepherd.

The rest, between the awfulness of their late discovery and the odd conduct of this third visitor, looked as if they  
25 knew not what to think, and said nothing. Instinctively they withdrew further and further from the grim gentleman in their midst, whom some of them seemed to take for the Prince of Darkness himself, till they formed a remote circle, an empty space of floor being left between them and  
30 him—

“ . . . circulus, cujus centrum diabolus.”

The room was so silent—though there were more than twenty people in it—that nothing could be heard but the



patter of the rain against the window-shutters, accompanied by the occasional hiss of a stray drop that fell down the chimney into the fire, and the steady puffing of the man in the corner, who had now resumed his pipe of long clay.

The stillness was unexpectedly broken. The distant sound of a gun reverberated through the air—apparently from the direction of the county-town.

“Be jiggered!” cried the stranger who had sung the song, jumping up.

“What does that mean?” asked several.

“A prisoner escaped from the jail—that’s what it means.”

All listened. The sound was repeated, and none of them spoke but the man in the chimney-corner, who said quietly, “I’ve often been told that in this county they fire a gun at such times; but I never heard it till now.”

“I wonder if it is *my* man?” murmured the personage in cinder-gray.

“Surely it is!” said the shepherd involuntarily. “And surely we’ve zeed him! That little man who looked in at the door by now, and quivered like a leaf when he zeed ye and heard your song!”

“His teeth chattered, and the breath went out of his body,” said the dairyman.

“And his heart seemed to sink within him like a stone,” said Oliver Giles.

“And he bolted as if he’d been shot at,” said the hedge-carpenter.

“True—his teeth chattered, and his heart seemed to sink; and he bolted as if he’d been shot at,” slowly summed up the man in the chimney-corner.

“I didn’t notice it,” remarked the hangman.

“We were all a-wondering what made him run off in such

a fright," faltered one of the women against the wall, "and now 'tis explained!"

The firing of the alarm-gun went on at intervals, low and sullenly, and their suspicions became a certainty.  
5 The sinister gentleman in cinder-gray roused himself. "Is there a constable here?" he asked, in thick tones. "If so, let him step forward."

The engaged man of fifty stepped quavering out from the wall, his betrothed beginning to sob on the back of  
10 the chair.

"You are a sworn constable?"

"I be, sir."

"Then pursue the criminal at once, with assistance, and bring him back here. He can't have gone far."

15 "I will, sir, I will—when I've got my staff. I'll go home and get it, and come sharp here, and start in a body."

"Staff!—never mind your staff; the man'll be gone!"

"But I can't do nothing without my staff—can I, William, and John, and Charles Jake? No; for there's the  
20 king's royal crown a painted on en in yaller and gold, and the lion and the unicorn, so as when I raise en up and hit my prisoner, 'tis made a lawful blow thereby. I wouldn't 'tempt to take up a man without my staff—no, not I. If I hadn't the law to gie me courage, why, instead o' my  
25 taking up him he might take up me!"

"Now, I'm a king's man myself, and can give you authority enough for this," said the formidable officer in gray.

"Now then, all of ye, be ready. Have ye any lanterns?"

"Yes—have ye any lanterns?—I demand it!" said the  
30 constable.

"And the rest of you able-bodied——"

"Able-bodied men—yes—the rest of ye!" said the constable.

"Have you some good stout staves and pitchforks——"

"Staves and pitchforks—in the name o' the law! And take 'em in yer hands and go in quest, and do as we in authority tell ye!"

Thus aroused, the men prepared to give chase. The evidence was, indeed, though circumstantial, so convincing, that but little argument was needed to show the shepherd's guests that after what they had seen it would look very much like connivance if they did not instantly pursue the unhappy third stranger, who could not as yet have gone more than a few hundred yards over such uneven country. 10

A shepherd is always well provided with lanterns; and, lighting these hastily, and with hurdle-staves in their hands, they poured out of the door, taking a direction along the crest of the hill, away from the town, the rain having fortunately a little abated. 15

Disturbed by the noise, or possibly by unpleasant dreams of her baptism, the child who had been christened began to cry heart-brokenly in the room overhead. These notes of grief came down through the chinks of the floor to the ears of the women below, who jumped up one by one, and seemed glad of the excuse to ascend and comfort the baby, for the incidents of the last half-hour greatly oppressed them. Thus in the space of two or three minutes the room on the ground-floor was deserted quite. 20

But it was not for long. Hardly had the sound of footsteps died away when a man returned round the corner of the house from the direction the pursuers had taken. Peeping in at the door, and seeing nobody there, he entered leisurely. It was the stranger of the chimney-corner, who had gone out with the rest. The motive of his return was shown by his helping himself to a cut piece of skimmer-cake that lay on a ledge beside where he had sat, and which he had apparently forgotten to take with him. He also poured out half a cup more mead from the quantity that 25 30

remained, ravenously eating and drinking these as he stood. He had not finished when another figure came in just as quietly—his friend in cinder-gray.

“O—you here?” said the latter, smiling. “I thought  
5 you had gone to help in the capture.” And this speaker also revealed the object of his return by looking solicitously round for the fascinating mug of old mead.

“And I thought you had gone,” said the other, continuing his skimmer-cake with some effort.

10 “Well, on second thoughts, I felt there were enough without me,” said the first confidentially, “and such a night as it is, too. Besides, ’tis the business o’ the Government to take care of its criminals—not mine.”

“True; so it is. And I felt as you did, that there were  
15 enough without me.”

“I don’t want to break my limbs running over the humps and hollows of this wild country.”

“Nor I neither, between you and me.”

“These shepherd-people are used to it—simple-minded  
20 souls, you know, stirred up to anything in a moment. They’ll have him ready for me before the morning, and no trouble to me at all.”

“They’ll have him, and we shall have saved ourselves all labor in the matter.”

25 “True, true. Well, my way is to Casterbridge; and ’tis as much as my legs will do to take me that far. Going the same way?”

“No, I am sorry to say! I have to get home over there” (he nodded indefinitely to the right), “and I feel as you  
30 do, that it is quite enough for my legs to do before bedtime.”

The other had by this time finished the mead in the mug, after which, shaking hands heartily at the door, and wishing each other well, they went their several ways.

In the meantime the company of pursuers had reached the end of the hog's-back elevation which dominated this part of the down. They had decided on no particular plan of action; and, finding that the man of the baleful trade was no longer in their company, they seemed quite unable to form any such plan now. They descended in all directions down the hill, and straightway several of the party fell into the snare set by Nature for all misguided midnight rambles over this part of the cretaceous formation. The "lanchets," or flint slopes, which belted the escarpment at intervals of a dozen yards, took the less cautious ones un-awares, and losing their footing on the rubbly steep they slid sharply downwards, the lanterns rolling from their hands to the bottom, and there lying on their sides till the horn was scorched through.

When they had again gathered themselves together, the shepherd, as the man who knew the country best, took the lead, and guided them round these treacherous inclines. The lanterns, which seemed rather to dazzle their eyes and warn the fugitive than to assist them in the exploration, were extinguished, due silence was observed; and in this more rational order they plunged into the vale. It was a grassy, briery, moist defile, affording some shelter to any person who had sought it; but the party perambulated it in vain, and ascended on the other side. Here they wandered apart, and after an interval closed together again to report progress. At the second time of closing in they found themselves near a lonely ash, the single tree on this part of the coomb, probably sown there by a passing bird some fifty years before. And here, standing a little to one side of the trunk, as motionless as the trunk itself, appeared the man they were in quest of, his outline being well defined against the sky beyond. The band noiselessly drew up and faced him.

"Your money or your life!" said the constable sternly to the still figure.

"No, no," whispered John Pitcher. "'Tisn't our side ought to say that. That's the doctrine of vagabonds like  
5 him, and we be on the side of the law."

"Well, well," replied the constable impatiently; "I must say something, mustn't I? and if you had all the weight o' this undertaking upon your mind, perhaps you'd say the wrong thing too!—Prisoner at the bar, surrender, in  
10 the name of the Father—the Crown, I mane!"

The man under the tree seemed now to notice them for the first time, and, giving them no opportunity whatever for exhibiting their courage, he strolled slowly towards them. He was, indeed, the little man, the third stranger;  
15 but his trepidation had in a great measure gone.

"Well, travelers," he said, "did I hear ye speak to me?"

"You did: you've got to come and be our prisoner at once!" said the constable. "We arrest 'ee on the charge  
20 of not biding in Casterbridge jail in a decent proper manner to be hung to-morrow morning. Neighbors, do your duty, and seize the culprit!"

On hearing the charge, the man seemed enlightened, and, saying not another word, resigned himself with preter-  
25 natural civility to the search-party, who, with their staves in their hands, surrounded him on all sides, and marched him back towards the shepherd's cottage.

It was eleven o'clock by the time they arrived. The light shining from the open door, a sound of men's voices  
30 within, proclaimed to them as they approached the house that some new events had arisen in their absence. On entering they discovered the shepherd's living room to be invaded by two officers from Casterbridge jail, and a well-known magistrate who lived at the nearest country-

seat, intelligence of the escape having become generally circulated.

"Gentlemen," said the constable, "I have brought back your man—not without risk and danger; but every one must do his duty! He is inside this circle of able-bodied persons, who have lent me useful aid, considering their ignorance of Crown work. Men, bring forward your prisoner!" And the third stranger was led to the light. 5

"Who is this?" said one of the officials.

"The man," said the constable. 10

"Certainly not," said the turnkey; and the first corroborated his statement.

"But how can it be otherwise?" asked the constable. "Or why was he so terrified at sight o' the singing instrument of the law who sat there?" Here he related the strange behavior of the third stranger on entering the house during the hangman's song. 15

"Can't understand it," said the officer coolly. "All I know is that it is not the condemned man. He's quite a different character from this one; a gauntish fellow, with dark hair and eyes, rather good-looking, and with a musical bass voice that if you heard it once you'd never mistake as long as you lived." 20

"Why, souls—'twas the man in the chimney-corner!"

"Hey—what?" said the magistrate, coming forward after inquiring particulars from the shepherd in the background. "Haven't you got the man after all?" 25

"Well, sir," said the constable, "he's the man we were in search of, that's true; and yet he's not the man we were in search of. For the man we were in search of was not the man we wanted, sir, if you understand my every-day way; for 'twas the man in the chimney-corner!" 30

"A pretty kettle of fish altogether!" said the magistrate. "You had better start for the other man at once."

The prisoner now spoke for the first time. The mention of the man in the chimney-corner seemed to have moved him as nothing else could do. "Sir," he said, stepping forward to the magistrate, "take no more trouble about me.

5 The time is come when I may as well speak. I have done nothing; my crime is that the condemned man is my brother. Early this afternoon I left home at Shottsford to tramp it all the way to Casterbridge jail to bid him farewell. I was benighted, and called here to rest and ask the way.

10 When I opened the door I saw before me the very man, my brother, that I thought to see in the condemned cell at Casterbridge. He was in this chimney-corner; and jammed close to him, so that he could not have got out if he had tried, was the executioner who'd come to take his life,

15 singing a song about it and not knowing that it was his victim who was close by, joining in to save appearances. My brother looked a glance of agony at me, and I knew he meant, 'Don't reveal what you see; my life depends on it.' I was so terror-struck that I could hardly stand,

20 and, not knowing what I did, I turned and hurried away."

The narrator's manner and tone had the stamp of truth, and his story made a great impression on all around. "And do you know where your brother is at the present time?" asked the magistrate.

25 "I do not. I have never seen him since I closed this door."

"I can testify to that, for we've been between ye ever since," said the constable.

"Where does he think to fly to?—what is his occupation?"

30

"He's a watch-and-clock-maker, sir."

"'A said 'a was a wheelwright—a wicked rogue," said the constable.

"The wheels of clocks and watches he meant, no doubt,"



said Shepherd Fennel. "I thought his hands were palish for's trade."

"Well, it appears to me that nothing can be gained by retaining this poor man in custody," said the magistrate; "your business lies with the other, unquestionably."

And so the little man was released off-hand; but he looked nothing the less sad on that account, it being beyond the power of magistrate or constable to raze out the written troubles in his brain, for they concerned another whom he regarded with more solicitude than himself. When this was done, and the man had gone his way, the night was found to be so far advanced that it was deemed useless to renew the search before the next morning.

Next day, accordingly, the quest for the clever sheep-stealer became general and keen, to all appearance at least. But the intended punishment was cruelly disproportioned to the transgression, and the sympathy of a great many country-folk in that district was strongly on the side of the fugitive. Moreover, his marvelous coolness and daring in hob-and-nobbing with the hangman, under the unprecedented circumstances of the shepherd's party, won their admiration. So that it may be questioned if all those who ostensibly made themselves so busy in exploring woods and fields and lanes were quite so thorough when it came to the private examination of their own lofts and outhouses. Stories were afloat of a mysterious figure being occasionally seen in some old overgrown trackway or other, remote from turnpike roads; but when a search was instituted in any of these suspected quarters nobody was found. Thus the days and weeks passed without tidings.

In brief, the bass-voiced man of the chimney-corner was never recaptured. Some said that he went across the sea, others that he did not, but buried himself in the depths of a populous city. At any rate, the gentleman in cinder-gray

never did his morning's work at Casterbridge, nor met anywhere at all, for business purposes, the genial comrade with whom he had passed an hour of relaxation in the lonely house on the coomb.

- 5 The grass has long been green on the graves of Shepherd Fennel and his frugal wife; the guests who made up the christening party have mainly followed their entertainers to the tomb; the baby in whose honor they all had met is a matron in the sere and yellow leaf. But the arrival of  
10 the three strangers at the shepherd's that night, and the details connected therewith, is a story as well known as ever in the country about Higher Crowstairs.

# WILL O' THE MILL

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## THE PLAIN AND THE STARS

THE Mill where Will lived with his adopted parents stood in a falling valley between pinewoods and great mountains. Above, hill after hill soared upwards until they soared out of the depth of the hardest timber, and stood naked against the sky. Some way up, a long gray village lay like a seam or a rag of vapor on a wooded hill-side; and when the wind was favorable, the sound of the church bells would drop down, thin and silvery, to Will. Below, the valley grew ever steeper and steeper, and at the same time widened out on either hand; and from an eminence beside the mill it was possible to see its whole length and away beyond it over a wide plain, where the river turned and shone, and moved on from city to city on its voyage towards the sea. It chanced that over this valley there lay a pass into a neighboring kingdom, so that, quiet and rural as it was, the road that ran along beside the river was a high thoroughfare between two splendid and powerful societies. All through the summer, traveling-carriages came crawling up, or went plunging briskly downwards past the mill; and as it happened that the other side was very much easier of ascent, the path was not much frequented, except by people going in one direction; and of all the carriages that Will saw go by, five-sixths were plunging briskly downwards and only one-sixth crawling up. Much more was this the case with foot-passengers. All the light-footed tourists, all the

pedlars laden with strange wares, were tending downward like the river that accompanied their path. Nor was this all; for when Will was yet a child a disastrous war arose over a great part of the world. The newspapers  
5 were full of defeats and victories, the earth rang with cavalry hoofs, and often for days together and for miles around the coil of battle terrified good people from their labors in the field. Of all this, nothing was heard for a long time in the valley; but at last one of the commanders  
10 pushed an army over the pass by forced marches, and for three days horse and foot, cannon and tumbril, drum and standard, kept pouring downward past the mill. All day the child stood and watched them on their passage—the rhythmical stride, the pale, unshaven faces tanned  
15 about the eyes, the discolored regimentals and the tattered flags, filled him with a sense of weariness, pity, and wonder; and all night long, after he was in bed, he could hear the cannon pounding and the feet trampling, and the great armament sweeping onward and downward  
20 past the mill. No one in the valley ever heard the fate of the expedition, for they lay out of the way of gossip in those troublous times; but Will saw one thing plainly, that not a man returned. Whither had they all gone? Whither went all the tourists and pedlars with strange  
25 wares? whither all the brisk barouches with servants in the dicky? whither the water of the stream, ever coursing downward and ever renewed from above? Even the wind blew oftener down the valley, and carried the dead leaves along with it in the fall. It seemed like a great  
30 conspiracy of things animate and inanimate; they all went downward, fleetly and gaily downward, and only he, it seemed, remained behind, like a stock upon the wayside. It sometimes made him glad when he noticed how the fishes kept their heads up stream. They, at least, stood

faithfully by him, while all else were posting downward to the unknown world.

One evening he asked the miller where the river went.

"It goes down the valley," answered he, "and turns 5  
a power of mills—six score mills, they say, from here to Unterdeck—and it none the wearier after all. And then it goes out into the lowlands, and waters the great corn country, and runs through a sight of fine cities (so they say) where kings live all alone in great palaces, with a sentry 10  
walking up and down before the door. And it goes under bridges with stone men upon them, looking down and smiling so curious at the water, and living folks leaning their elbows on the wall and looking over too. And then it goes on and on, and down through marshes and sands, 15  
until at last it falls into the sea, where the ships are that bring parrots and tobacco from the Indies. Ay, it has a long trot before it as it goes singing over our weir, bless its heart!"

"And what is the sea?" asked Will. 20

"The sea!" cried the miller. "Lord help us all, it is the greatest thing God made! That is where all the water in the world runs down into a great salt lake. There it lies, as flat as my hand and as innocent-like as a child; but they do say when the wind blows it gets up into water- 25  
mountains bigger than any of ours, and swallows down great ships bigger than our mill, and makes such a roaring that you can hear it miles away upon the land. There are great fish in it five times bigger than a bull, and one old serpent as long as our river and as old as all the world, 30  
with whiskers like a man, and a crown of silver on her head."

Will thought he had never heard anything like this, and he kept on asking question after question about the

world that lay away down the river, with all its perils and marvels, until the old miller became quite interested himself, and at last took him by the hand and led him to the hill-top that overlooks the valley and the plain. The sun  
5 was near setting, and hung low down in a cloudless sky. Everything was defined and glorified in golden light. Will had never seen so great an expanse of country in his life; he stood and gazed with all his eyes. He could see the cities, and the woods and fields, and the bright curves  
10 of the river, and far away to where the rim of the plain trenched along the shining heavens. An over-mastering emotion seized upon the boy, soul and body; his heart beat so thickly that he could not breathe; the scene swam before his eyes; the sun seemed to wheel round and round,  
15 and throw off, as it turned, strange shapes which disappeared with the rapidity of thought, and were succeeded by others. Will covered his face with his hands, and burst into a violent fit of tears; and the poor miller, sadly disappointed and perplexed, saw nothing better for it  
20 than to take him up in his arms and carry him home in silence.

From that day forward Will was full of new hopes and longings. Something kept tugging at his heart-strings; the running water carried his desires along with it as  
25 he dreamed over its fleeting surface; the wind, as it ran over innumerable tree-tops, hailed him with encouraging words; branches beckoned downward; the open road, as it shouldered round the angles and went turning and vanishing faster and faster down the valley, tortured him  
30 with its solicitations. He spent long whiles on the eminence, looking down the river-shed and abroad on the flat lowlands, and watched the clouds that traveled forth upon the sluggish wind and trailed their purple shadows on the plain; or he would linger by the wayside, and follow the

carriages with his eyes as they rattled downward by the river. It did not matter what it was; everything that went that way, were it cloud or carriage, bird or brown water in the stream, he felt his heart flow out after it in an ecstasy of longing.

5

We are told by men of science that all the ventures of mariners on the sea, all that counter-marching of tribes and races that confounds old history with its dust and rumor, sprang from nothing more abstruse than the laws of supply and demand, and a certain natural instinct 10 for cheap rations. To any one thinking deeply, this will seem a dull and pitiful explanation. The tribes that came swarming out of the North and East, if they were indeed pressed onward from behind by others, were drawn at the same time by the magnetic influence of the South and 15 West. The fame of other lands had reached them; the name of the eternal city rang in their ears; they were not colonists, but pilgrims; they traveled towards wine and gold and sunshine, but their hearts were set on something higher. That divine unrest, that old stinging trouble of 20 humanity that makes all high achievements and all miserable failure, the same that spread wings with Icarus, the same that sent Columbus into the desolate Atlantic, inspired and supported these barbarians on their perilous march. There is one legend which profoundly represents 25 their spirit, of how a flying party of these wanderers encountered a very old man shod with iron. The old man asked them whither they were going; and they answered with one voice: "To the Eternal City!" He looked upon them gravely. "I have sought it," he said, 30 "over the most part of the world. Three such pairs as I now carry on my feet have I worn out upon this pilgrimage, and now the fourth is growing slender underneath my steps. And all this while I have not found the city."

And he turned and went his own way alone, leaving them astonished.

And yet this would scarcely parallel the intensity of Will's feeling for the plain. If he could only go far enough  
5 out there, he felt as if his eyesight would be purged and clarified, as if his hearing would grow more delicate, and his very breath would come and go with luxury. He was transplanted and withering where he was; he lay in a strange country and was sick for home. Bit by bit, he  
10 pieced together broken notions of the world below: of the river, ever moving and growing until it sailed forth into the majestic ocean; of the cities, full of brisk and beautiful people, playing fountains, bands of music and marble palaces, and lighted up at night from end to end with  
15 artificial stars of gold; of the great churches, wise universities, brave armies, and untold money lying stored in vaults; of the high-flying vice that moved in the sunshine, and the stealth and swiftness of midnight murder. I have said he was sick as if for home: the figure halts. He was  
20 like some one lying in twilit, formless pre-existence, and stretching out his hands lovingly towards many-colored, many-sounding life. It was no wonder he was unhappy, he would go and tell the fish: they were made for their life, wished for no more than worms and running water, and  
25 a hole below a falling bank; but he was differently designed, full of desires and aspirations, itching at the fingers, lusting with the eyes, whom the whole variegated world could not satisfy with aspects. The true life, the true bright sunshine, lay far out upon the plain. And O!  
30 to see this sunlight once before he died! to move with a jocund spirit in a golden land! to hear the trained singers and sweet church bells, and see the holiday gardens! "And O fish!" he would cry, "if you would only turn your noses down stream, you could swim so easily into



the fabled waters and see the vast ships passing over your head like clouds, and hear the great water-hills making music over you all day long!" But the fish kept looking patiently in their own direction, until Will hardly knew whether to laugh or cry.

5

Hitherto the traffic on the road had passed by Will, like something seen in a picture: he had perhaps exchanged salutations with a tourist, or caught sight of an old gentleman in a traveling-cap at a carriage window; but for the most part it had been a mere symbol, which he contemplated from apart and with something of a superstitious feeling. A time came at last when this was to be changed. The miller, who was a greedy man in his way, and never forewent an opportunity of honest profit, turned the mill-house into a little wayside inn, and, several pieces of good fortune falling in opportunely, built stables and got the position of post-master on the road. It now became Will's duty to wait upon people, as they sat to break their fasts in the little arbor at the top of the mill garden; and you may be sure that he kept his ears open, and learned many new things about the outside world as he brought the omelette or the wine. Nay, he would often get into conversation with single guests, and by adroit questions and polite attention, not only gratify his own curiosity, but win the good-will of the travelers. Many complimented the old couple on their serving-boy; and a professor was eager to take him away with him, and have him properly educated in the plain. The miller and his wife were mightily astonished and even more pleased. They thought it a very good thing that they should have opened their inn. "You see," the old man would remark, "he has a kind of talent for a publican; he never would have made anything else!" And so life wagged on in the valley, with high satisfaction to all concerned but Will.

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Every carriage that left the inn-door seemed to take a part of him away with it; and when people jestingly offered him a lift, he could with difficulty command his emotion. Night after night he would dream that he  
5 was awakened by flustered servants, and that a splendid equipage waited at the door to carry him down into the plain; night after night; until the dream, which had seemed all jollity to him at first, began to take on a color of gravity, and the nocturnal summons and waiting  
10 equipage occupied a place in his mind as something to be both feared and hoped for.

One day, when Will was about sixteen, a fat young man arrived at sunset to pass the night. He was a contented-looking fellow, with a jolly eye, and carried a knapsack.  
15 While dinner was preparing, he sat in the arbor to read a book; but as soon as he had begun to observe Will, the book was laid aside; he was plainly one of those who prefer living people to people made of ink and paper. Will, on his part, although he had not been much interested in the  
20 stranger at first sight, soon began to take a great deal of pleasure in his talk, which was full of good nature and good sense, and at last conceived a great respect for his character and wisdom. They sat far into the night; and about two in the morning Will opened his heart to the young man  
25 and told him how he longed to leave the valley and what bright hopes he had connected with the cities of the plain. The young man whistled, and then broke into a smile.

"My young friend," he remarked, "you are a very curious little fellow to be sure, and wish a great many  
30 things which you will never get. Why, you would feel quite ashamed if you knew how the little fellows in these fairy cities of yours are all after the same sort of nonsense and keep breaking their hearts to get up into the mountains. And let me tell you, those who go down into the

plains are a very short while there before they wish themselves heartily back again. The air is not so light nor so pure; nor is the sun any brighter. As for the beautiful men and women, you would see many of them in rags and many of them deformed with horrible disorders; and a city is so hard a place for people who are poor and sensitive that many choose to die by their own hand." 5

"You must think me very simple," answered Will. "Although I have never been out of this valley, believe me, I have used my eyes. I know how one thing lives 10 on another; for instance, how the fish hangs in the eddy to catch his fellows; and the shepherd, who makes so pretty a picture carrying home the lamb, is only carrying it home for dinner. I do not expect to find all things right in your cities. That is not what troubles me; it might 15 have been that once upon a time; but although I live here always, I have asked many questions and learned a great deal in these last years, and certainly enough to cure me of my old fancies. But you would not have me die like a dog and not see all that is to be seen, and do all that a 20 man can do, let it be good or evil? you would not have me spend all my days between this road here and the river, and not so much as make a motion to be up and live my life?—I would rather die out of hand," he cried, "than linger on as I am doing." 25

"Thousands of people," said the young man, "live and die like you, and are none the less happy."

"Ah!" said Will, "if there are thousands who would like, why should not one of them have my place?"

It was quite dark; there was a hanging lamp in the 30 arbor which lit up the table and the faces of the speakers; and along the arch, the leaves upon the trellis stood out illuminated against the night sky, a pattern of transparent green upon a dusky purple. The fat young man

rose, and, taking Will by the arm, led him out under the open heavens.

"Did you ever look at the stars?" he asked, pointing upwards.

5 "Often and often," answered Will.

"And do you know what they are?"

"I have fancied many things."

"They are worlds like ours," said the young man.

"Some of them less; many of them a million times greater;  
10 and some of the least sparkles that you see are not only worlds, but whole clusters of worlds turning about each other in the midst of space. We do not know what there may be in any of them; perhaps the answer to all our difficulties or the cure of all our sufferings: and yet we can  
15 never reach them; not all the skill of the craftiest of men can fit out a ship for the nearest of these our neighbors, nor would the life of the most aged suffice for such a journey. When a great battle has been lost or a dear friend is dead, when we are hipped or in high spirits, there they  
20 are unweariedly shining overhead. We may stand down here, a whole army of us together, and shout until we break our hearts, and not a whisper reaches them. We may climb the highest mountain, and we are no nearer them. All we can do is to stand down here in the garden  
25 and take off our hats; the starshine lights upon our heads, and where mine is a little bald, I dare say you can see it glisten in the darkness. The mountain and the mouse. That is like to be all we shall ever have to do with Arcturus or Aldebaran. Can you apply a parable?" he added,  
30 laying his hand upon Will's shoulder. "It is not the same thing as a reason, but usually vastly more convincing."

Will hung his head a little, and then raised it once more to heaven. The stars seemed to expand and emit a sharper brilliancy; and as he kept turning his eyes higher and

higher, they seemed to increase in multitude under his gaze.

"I see," he said, turning to the young man. "We are in a rat-trap."

"Something of that size. Did you ever see a squirrel turning in a cage? and another squirrel sitting philosophically over his nuts? I needn't ask you which of them looked more of a fool." 5

#### THE PARSON'S MARJORY

After some years the old people died, both in one winter, very carefully tended by their adopted son, and very 10 quietly mourned when they were gone. People who had heard of his roving fancies supposed he would hasten to sell the property, and go down the river to push his fortunes. But there was never any sign of such an intention on the part of Will. On the contrary, he had the inn set 15 on a better footing, and hired a couple of servants to assist him in carrying it on; and there he settled down, a kind, talkative, inscrutable young man, six feet three in his stockings, with an iron constitution and a friendly voice. He soon began to take rank in the district as a bit of an 20 oddity: it was not much to be wondered at from the first, for he was always full of notions, and kept calling the plainest common-sense in question; but what most raised the report upon him was the odd circumstance of his courtship with the parson's Marjory. 25

The parson's Marjory was a lass about nineteen, when Will would be about thirty; well enough looking, and much better educated than any other girl in that part of the country, as became her parentage. She held her head 30 very high, and had already refused several offers of marriage with a grand air, which had got her hard names among the neighbors. For all that she was a good

girl, and one that would have made any man well contented.

Will had never seen much of her; for although the church and parsonage were only two miles from his own door, he was never known to go there but on Sundays. It chanced, however, that the parsonage fell into disrepair, and had to be dismantled; and the parson and his daughter took lodgings for a month or so, on very much reduced terms, at Will's inn. Now, what with the inn, and the mill, and the old miller's savings, our friend was a man of substance; and besides that, he had a name for good temper and shrewdness, which make a capital portion in marriage; and so it was currently gossiped, among their ill-wishers, that the parson and his daughter had not chosen their temporary lodging with their eyes shut. Will was about the last man in the world to be cajoled or frightened into marriage. You had only to look into his eyes, limpid and still like pools of water, and yet with a sort of clear light that seemed to come from within, and you would understand at once that here was one who knew his own mind, and would stand to it immovably. Marjory herself was no weakling by her looks, with strong steady eyes and a resolute and quiet bearing. It might be a question whether she was not Will's match in steadfastness, after all, or which of them would rule the roast in marriage. But Marjory had never given it a thought, and accompanied her father with the most unshaken innocence and unconcern.

The season was still so early that Will's customers were few and far between; but the lilacs were already flowering, and the weather was so mild that the party took dinner under the trellis, with the noise of the river in their ears and the woods ringing about them with the songs of birds. Will soon began to take a particular pleasure in these din-

ners. The parson was rather a dull companion, with a habit of dozing at table; but nothing rude or cruel ever fell from his lips. And as for the parson's daughter, she suited her surroundings with the best grace imaginable; and whatever she said seemed so pat and pretty that Will conceived a great idea of her talents. He could see her face, as she leaned forward, against a background of rising pine woods; her eyes shone peaceably; the light lay around her hair like a kerchief; something that was hardly a smile rippled her pale cheeks, and Will could not contain himself from gazing on her in an agreeable dismay. She looked, even in her quietest moments, so complete in herself, and so quick with life down to her finger tips and the very skirts of her dress, that the remainder of created things became no more than a blot by comparison; and if Will glanced away from her to her surroundings, the trees looked inanimate and senseless, the clouds hung in heaven like dead things, and even the mountain tops were disenchanted. The whole valley could not compare in looks with this one girl.

Will was always observant in the society of his fellow-creatures; but his observation became almost painfully eager in the case of Marjory. He listened to all she uttered, and read her eyes, at the same time, for the unspoken commentary. Many kind, simple, and sincere speeches found an echo in his heart. He became conscious of a soul beautifully poised upon itself, nothing doubting, nothing desiring, clothed in peace. It was not possible to separate her thoughts from her appearance. The turn of her wrist, the still sound of her voice, the light in her eyes, the lines of her body, fell in tune with her grave and gentle words, like the accompaniment that sustains and harmonises the voice of the singer. Her influence was one thing, not to be divided or discussed, only

to be felt with gratitude and joy. To Will, her presence recalled something of his childhood, and the thought of her took its place in his mind beside that of dawn, of running water, and of the earliest violets and lilacs. It is the property of things seen for the first time, or for the first time after long, like the flowers in spring, to reawaken in us the sharp edge of sense and that impression of mystic strangeness which otherwise passes out of life with the coming of years; but the sight of a loved face is what renews a man's character from the fountain upwards.

One day after dinner Will took a stroll among the firs; a grave beatitude possessed him from top to toe, and he kept smiling to himself and the landscape as he went. The river ran between the stepping-stones with a pretty wimple; a bird sang loudly in the wood; the hill-tops looked immeasurably high, and as he glanced at them from time to time seemed to contemplate his movements with a beneficent but awful curiosity. His way took him to the eminence which overlooked the plain; and there he sat down upon a stone, and fell into deep and pleasant thought. The plain lay abroad with its cities and silver river; everything was asleep, except a great eddy of birds which kept rising and falling and going round and round in the blue air. He repeated Marjory's name aloud, and the sound of it gratified his ear. He shut his eyes, and her image sprang up before him, quietly luminous and attended with good thoughts. The river might run for ever; the birds fly higher and higher till they touched the stars. He saw it was empty bustle after all; for here, without stirring a foot, waiting patiently in his own narrow valley, he also had attained the better sunlight.

The next day Will made a sort of declaration across the dinner-table, while the parson was filling his pipe.

"Miss Marjory," he said, "I never knew any one I



liked so well as you. I am mostly a cold, unkindly sort of man; not from want of heart, but out of strangeness in my way of thinking; and people seem far away from me. 'Tis as if there were a circle round me, which kept every one out but you; I can hear the others talking and laughing; but you come quite close. Maybe this is disagreeable to you?" he asked. 5

Marjory made no answer.

"Speak up, girl," said the parson.

"Nay, now," returned Will, "I wouldn't press her, 10 parson. I feel tongue-tied myself, who am not used to it; and she's a woman, and little more than a child, when all is said. But for my part, as far as I can understand what people mean by it, I fancy I must be what they call in love. I do not wish to be held as committing myself; 15 for I may be wrong; but that is how I believe things are with me. And if Miss Marjory should feel any otherwise on her part, mayhap she would be so kind as shake her head."

Marjory was silent, and gave no sign that she had 20 heard.

"How is that, parson?" asked Will.

"The girl must speak," replied the parson, laying down his pipe. "Here's our neighbor who says he loves you, Madge. Do you love him, ay or no?" 25

"I think I do," said Marjory faintly.

"Well, then, that's all that could be wished!" cried Will heartily. And he took her hand across the table, and held it a moment in both of his with great satisfaction.

"You must marry," observed the parson, replacing his 30 pipe in his mouth.

"Is that the right thing to do, think you?" demanded Will.

"It is indispensable," said the parson.

"Very well," replied the wooer.

Two or three days passed away with great delight to Will, although a bystander might scarce have found it out. He continued to take his meals opposite Marjory, and to talk with her and gaze upon her in her father's presence; but he made no attempt to see her alone, nor in any other way changed his conduct towards her from what it had been since the beginning. Perhaps the girl was a little disappointed, and perhaps not unjustly; and yet if it had been enough to be always in the thoughts of another person, and so pervade and alter his whole life, she might have been thoroughly contented. For she was never out of Will's mind for an instant. He sat over the stream, and watched the dust of the eddy, and the poised fish, and straining weeds; he wandered out alone into the purple even, with all the blackbirds piping round him in the wood; he rose early in the morning, and saw the sky turn from grey to gold, and the light leap upon the hill-tops; and all the while he kept wondering if he had never seen such things before, or how it was that they should look so different now. The sound of his own mill-wheel, or of the wind among the trees, confounded and charmed his heart. The most enchanting thoughts presented themselves unbidden in his mind. He was so happy that he could not sleep at night, and so restless that he could hardly sit still out of her company. And yet it seemed as if he avoided her rather than sought her out.

One day, as he was coming home from a ramble, Will found Marjory in the garden picking flowers, and as he came up with her, slackened his pace and continued walking by her side.

"You like flowers?" he said.

"Indeed I love them dearly," she replied. "Do you?"

"Why, no," said he, "not so much. They are a very

small affair, when all is done. I can fancy people caring for them greatly, but not doing as you are just now."

"How?" she asked, pausing and looking up at him.

"Plucking them," said he. "They are a deal better off where they are, and look a deal prettier, if you go to that." 5

"I wish to have them for my own," she answered, "to carry them near my heart, and keep them in my room. They tempt me when they grow here; they seem to say, 'Come and do something with us'; but once I have cut them and put them by, the charm is laid, and I can look 10 at them with quite an easy heart."

"You wish to possess them," replied Will, "in order to think no more about them. It's a bit like killing the goose with the golden eggs. It's a bit like what I wished to do when I was a boy. Because I had a fancy for look- 15 ing out over the plain, I wished to go down there—where I couldn't look out over it any longer. Was not that fine reasoning? Dear, dear, if they only thought of it, all the world would do like me; and you would let your flowers alone, just as I stay up here in the mountains." Suddenly he broke off sharp. "By the Lord!" he cried. 20 And when she asked him what was wrong, he turned the question off, and walked away into the house with rather a humorous expression of face.

He was silent at table; and after the night had fallen 25 and the stars had come out overhead, he walked up and down for hours in the court-yard and garden with an uneven pace. There was still a light in the window of Marjory's room: one little oblong patch of orange in a world of dark blue hills and silver starlight. Will's mind ran a 30 great deal on the window; but his thoughts were not very lover-like. "There she is in her room," he thought, "and there are the stars overhead:—a blessing upon both!" Both were good influences in his life; both soothed and

braced him in his profound contentment with the world. And what more should he desire with either? The fat young man and his counsels were so present to his mind that he threw back his head, and, putting his hands before  
5 his mouth, shouted aloud to the populous heavens. Whether from the position of his head or the sudden strain of the exertion, he seemed to see a momentary shock among the stars, and a diffusion of frosty light pass from one to another along the sky. At the same instant, a corner  
10 of the blind was lifted up and lowered again at once. He laughed a loud ho-ho! "One and another!" thought Will. "The stars tremble, and the blind goes up. Why, before Heaven, what a great magician I must be! Now, if I were only a fool, should not I be in a pretty way?"  
15 And he went off to bed, chuckling to himself: "If I were only a fool!"

The next morning, pretty early, he saw her once more in the garden, and sought her out.

"I have been thinking about getting married," he began abruptly; "and after having turned it all over, I have  
20 made up my mind it's not worth while."

She turned upon him for a single moment; but his radiant, kindly appearance would, under the circumstances, have disconcerted an angel, and she looked down  
25 again upon the ground in silence. He could see her tremble.

"I hope you don't mind," he went on, a little taken aback. "You ought not. I have turned it all over, and upon my soul there's nothing in it. We should never be  
30 one whit nearer than we are just now, and, if I am a wise man, nothing like so happy."

"It is unnecessary to go round about with me," she said. "I very well remember that you refused to commit yourself; and now that I see you were mistaken, and

in reality have never cared for me, I can only feel sad that I have been so far misled."

"I ask your pardon," said Will stoutly; "you do not understand my meaning. As to whether I have ever loved you or not, I must leave that to others. But for one thing, my feeling is not changed; and for another, you may make it your boast that you have made my whole life and character something different from what they were. I mean what I say; no less. I do not think getting married is worth while. I would rather you went on living with your father, so that I could walk over and see you once, or maybe twice a week, as people go to church, and then we should both be all the happier between whiles. That's my notion. But I'll marry you if you will," he added.

"Do you know that you are insulting me?" she broke out.

"Not I, Marjory," said he; "if there is anything in a clear conscience, not I. I offer all my heart's best affections; you can take it or want it, though I suspect it's beyond either your power or mine to change what has once been done, and set me fancy-free. I'll marry you, if you like; but I tell you again and again, it's not worth while, and we had best stay friends. Though I am a quiet man I have noticed a heap of things in my life. Trust in me, and take things as I propose; or, if you don't like that, say the word, and I'll marry you out of hand."

There was a considerable pause, and Will, who began to feel uneasy, began to grow angry in consequence.

"It seems you are too proud to say your mind," he said. "Believe me, that's a pity. A clean shrift makes simple living. Can a man be more downright or honorable to a woman than I have been? I have said my say, and given you your choice. Do you want me to

marry you? or will you take my friendship, as I think best? or have you had enough of me for good? Speak out for the dear God's sake! You know your father told you a girl should speak her mind in these affairs."

5 She seemed to recover herself at that, turned without a word, walked rapidly through the garden, and disappeared into the house, leaving Will in some confusion as to the result. He walked up and down the garden, whistling softly to himself. Sometimes he stopped and  
10 contemplated the sky and hill-tops; sometimes he went down to the tail of the weir and sat there, looking foolishly in the water. All this dubiety and perturbation was so foreign to his nature and the life which he had resolutely chosen for himself, that he began to regret Mar-  
15 jory's arrival. "After all," he thought, "I was as happy as a man need be. I could come down here and watch my fishes all day long if I wanted: I was as settled and contented as my old mill."

Marjory came down to dinner, looking very trim and  
20 quiet; and no sooner were all three at table than she made her father a speech, with her eyes fixed upon her plate, but showing no other sign of embarrassment or distress.

"Father," she began, "Mr. Will and I have been talking things over. We see that we have each made a mis-  
25 take about our feelings, and he has agreed, at my request, to give up all idea of marriage, and be no more than my very good friend, as in the past. You see, there is no shadow of a quarrel, and indeed I hope we shall see a great deal of him in the future, for his visits will always  
30 be welcome in our house. Of course, father, you will know best, but perhaps we should do better to leave Mr. Will's house for the present. I believe, after what has passed, we should hardly be agreeable inmates for some days."

Will, who had commanded himself with difficulty from the first, broke out upon this into an inarticulate noise, and raised one hand with an appearance of real dismay, as if he were about to interfere and contradict. But she checked him at once, looking up at him with a swift glance and an angry flush upon her cheek. 5

"You will perhaps have the good grace," she said, "to let me explain these matters for myself."

Will was put entirely out of countenance by her expression and the ring of her voice. He held his peace, concluding that there were some things about this girl beyond his comprehension, in which he was exactly right. 10

The poor parson was quite crestfallen. He tried to prove that this was no more than a true lover's tiff, which would pass off before night; and when he was dislodged from that position, he went on to argue that where there was no quarrel there could be no call for a separation; for the good man liked both his entertainment and his host. It was curious to see how the girl managed them, saying little all the time, and that very quietly, and yet twisting them round her finger and insensibly leading them wherever she would by feminine tact and generalship. It scarcely seemed to have been her doing—it seemed as if things had merely so fallen out—that she and her father took their departure that same afternoon in a farm-cart, and went farther down the valley, to wait, until their own house was ready for them, in another hamlet. But Will had been observing closely, and was well aware of her dexterity and resolution. When he found himself alone he had a great many curious matters to turn over in his mind. He was very sad and solitary, to begin with. All the interest had gone out of his life; and he might look up at the stars as long as he pleased, he somehow failed to find support or consolation. And 30

then he was in such a turmoil of spirit about Marjory. He had been puzzled and irritated at her behavior, and yet he could not keep himself from admiring it. He thought he recognized a fine perverse angel in that still  
5 soul which he had never hitherto suspected; and though he saw it was an influence that would fit but ill with his own life of artificial calm, he could not keep himself from ardently desiring to possess it. Like a man who has lived among shadows and now meets the sun, he  
10 was both pained and delighted.

As the days went forward he passed from one extreme to another; now pluming himself on the strength of his determination, now despising his timid and silly caution. The former was, perhaps, the true thought of his heart,  
15 and represented the regular tenor of the man's reflections; but the latter burst forth from time to time with an unruly violence, and then he would forget all consideration, and go up and down his house and garden or walk among the fir woods like one who is beside himself with remorse.  
20 To equable, steady-minded Will this state of matters was intolerable; and he determined, at whatever cost, to bring it to an end. So, one warm summer afternoon he put on his best clothes, took a thorn switch in his hand, and set out down the valley by the river. As soon as he had taken  
25 his determination, he had regained at a bound his customary peace of heart, and he enjoyed the bright weather and the variety of the scene without any admixture of alarm or unpleasant eagerness. It was nearly the same to him how the matter turned out. If she accepted him,  
30 he would have to marry her this time, which perhaps was all for the best. If she refused him, he would have done his utmost, and might follow his own way in the future with an untroubled conscience. He hoped, on the whole, she would refuse him; and then, again, as he saw the brown



roof which sheltered her, peeping through some willows at an angle of the stream, he was half inclined to reverse the wish, and more than half ashamed of himself for this infirmity of purpose.

Marjory seemed glad to see him, and gave him her hand 5 without affectation or delay.

"I have been thinking about this marriage," he began.

"So have I," she answered. "And I respect you more and more for a very wise man. You understood me better than I understood myself; and I am now quite certain that 10 things are all for the best as they are."

"At the same time—" ventured Will.

"You must be tired," she interrupted. "Take a seat and let me fetch you a glass of wine. The afternoon is so warm; and I wish you not to be displeased with your 15 visit. You must come quite often; once a week, if you can spare the time; I am always so glad to see my friends."

"Oh, very well," thought Will to himself. "It appears I was right after all." And he paid a very agreeable visit, walked home again in capital spirits, and gave himself no 20 further concern about the matter.

For nearly three years Will and Marjory continued on these terms, seeing each other once or twice a week without any word of love between them; and for all that time I believe Will was nearly as happy as a man can be. 25 He rather stinted himself the pleasure of seeing her; and he would often walk half-way over to the parsonage, and then back again, as if to whet his appetite. Indeed there was one corner of the road, whence he could see the church-spire wedged into a crevice of the valley between sloping 30 fir woods, with a triangular snatch of plain by way of background, which he greatly affected as a place to sit and moralize in before returning homewards; and the peasants got so much into the habit of finding him there in the

twilight that they gave it the name of "Will o' the Mill's Corner."

At the end of the three years Marjory played him a sad trick by suddenly marrying somebody else. Will kept his countenance bravely, and merely remarked that, for as little as he knew of women, he had acted very prudently in not marrying her himself three years before. She plainly knew very little of her own mind, and, in spite of a deceptive manner, was as fickle and flighty as the rest of them. He had to congratulate himself on an escape, he said, and would take a higher opinion of his own wisdom in consequence. But at heart, he was reasonably displeased, moped a good deal for a month or two, and fell away in flesh, to the astonishment of his serving-lads.

It was perhaps a year after this marriage that Will was awakened late one night by the sound of a horse galloping on the road, followed by precipitate knocking at the inn-door. He opened his window and saw a farm servant, mounted and holding a led horse by the bridle, who told him to make what haste he could and go along with him; for Marjory was dying, and had sent urgently to fetch him to her bedside. Will was no horseman, and made so little speed upon the way that the poor young wife was very near her end before he arrived. But they had some minutes' talk in private, and he was present and wept very bitterly while she breathed her last.

#### DEATH

Year after year went away into nothing, with great explosions and outcries in the cities on the plain; red revolt springing up and being suppressed in blood, battle swaying hither and thither, patient astronomers in observatory towers picking out and christening new stars,

plays being performed in lighted theaters, people being carried into hospitals on stretchers, and all the usual turmoil and agitation of men's lives in crowded centers. Up in Will's valley only the winds and seasons made an epoch; the fish hung in the swift stream, the birds circled 5 overhead, the pine-tops rustled underneath the stars, the tall hills stood over all; and Will went to and fro, minding his wayside inn, until the snow began to thicken on his head. His heart was young and vigorous and if his pulses kept a sober time, they still beat strong and 10 steady in his wrists. He carried a ruddy stain on either cheek, like a ripe apple; he stooped a little, but his step was still firm; and his sinewy hands were reached out to all men with a friendly pressure. His face was covered with those wrinkles which are got in open air, and which, rightly 15 looked at, are no more than a sort of permanent sun-burning; such wrinkles heighten the stupidity of stupid faces; but to a person like Will, with his clear eyes and smiling mouth, only give another charm by testifying to a simple and easy life. His talk was full of wise sayings. 20 He had a taste for other people; and other people had a taste for him. When the valley was full of tourists in the season, there were merry nights in Will's arbor; and his views, which seemed whimsical to his neighbors, were often enough admired by learned people out of towns and 25 colleges. Indeed, he had a very noble old age, and grew daily better known; so that his fame was heard of in the cities of the plain; and young men who had been summer travelers spoke together in *cafés* of Will o' the Mill and his rough philosophy. Many and many an invitation, you 30 may be sure, he had; but nothing could tempt him from his upland valley. He would shake his head and smile over his tobacco-pipe with a deal of meaning. "You come too late," he would answer. "I am a dead man now: I

have lived and died already. Fifty years ago you would have brought my heart into my mouth; and now you do not even tempt me. But that is the object of long living, that man should cease to care about life." And again:

5 "There is only one difference between a long life and a good dinner: that, in the dinner, the sweets come last." Or once more: "When I was a boy, I was a bit puzzled, and hardly knew whether it was myself or the world that was curious and worth looking into. Now, I know it is myself,  
10 and stick to that."

He never showed any symptoms of frailty, but kept stalwart and firm to the last; but they say he grew less talkative towards the end, and would listen to other people by the hour in an amused and sympathetic silence.  
15 Only, when he did speak, it was more to the point and more charged with old experience. He drank a bottle of wine gladly; above all, at sunset on the hill-top or quite late at night under the stars in the arbor. The sight of something attractive and unattainable seasoned his  
20 enjoyment, he would say; and he professed he had lived long enough to admire a candle all the more when he could compare it with a planet.

One night, in his seventy-second year, he awoke in bed, in such uneasiness of body and mind that he arose  
25 and dressed himself and went out to meditate in the arbor. It was pitch dark, without a star; the river was swollen, and the wet woods and meadows loaded the air with perfume. It had thundered during the day, and it promised more thunder for the morrow. A murky, stifling  
30 night for a man of seventy-two! Whether it was the weather or the wakefulness, or some little touch of fever in his old limbs, Will's mind was besieged by tumultuous and crying memories. His boyhood, the night with the fat young man, the death of his adopted parents, the summer

days with Marjory, and many of those small circumstances, which seem nothing to another, and are yet the very gist of a man's own life to himself—things seen, words heard, looks misconstrued—arose from their forgotten corners and usurped his attention. The dead themselves were with him, not merely taking part in this thin show of memory that defiled before his brain, but revisiting his bodily senses as they do in profound and vivid dreams. The fat young man leaned his elbows on the table opposite; Marjory came and went with an apronful of flowers between the garden and the arbor; he could hear the old parson knocking out his pipe or blowing his resonant nose. The tide of his consciousness ebbed and flowed; he was sometimes half asleep and drowned in his recollections of the past; and sometimes he was broad awake, wondering at himself. But about the middle of the night he was startled by the voice of the dead miller calling to him out of the house as he used to do on the arrival of custom. The hallucination was so perfect that Will sprang from his seat and stood listening for the summons to be repeated; and as he listened he became conscious of another noise besides the brawling of the river and the ringing in his feverish ears. It was like the stir of the horses and the creaking of harness, as though a carriage with an impatient team had been brought up upon the road before the courtyard gate. At such an hour, upon this rough and dangerous pass, the supposition was no better than absurd; and Will dismissed it from his mind, and resumed his seat upon the arbor chair; and sleep closed over him again like running water. He was once again awakened by the dead miller's call, thinner and more spectral than before; and once again he heard the noise of an equipage upon the road. And so thrice and four times, the same dream, or the same fancy, presented itself to his senses: until at length, smiling

to himself as when one humors a nervous child, he proceeded towards the gate to set his uncertainty at rest.

From the arbor to the gate was no great distance, and yet it took Will some time; it seemed as if the dead thickened around him in the court, and crossed his path at every step. For, first, he was suddenly surprised by an overpowering sweetness of heliotropes; it was as if his garden had been planted with this flower from end to end, and the hot, damp night had drawn forth all their perfumes in a breath. Now the heliotrope had been Marjory's favorite flower, and since her death not one of them had ever been planted in Will's ground.

"I must be going crazy," he thought. "Poor Marjory and her heliotropes!"

And with that he raised his eyes towards the window that had once been hers. If he had been bewildered before, he was now almost terrified; for there was a light in the room; the window was an orange oblong as of yore; and the corner of the blind was lifted and let fall as on the night when he stood and shouted to the stars in his perplexity. The illusion only endured an instant; but it left him somewhat unmanned, rubbing his eyes and staring at the outline of the house and the black night behind it. While he thus stood, and it seemed as if he must have stood there quite a long time, there came a renewal of the noises on the road: and he turned in time to meet a stranger, who was advancing to meet him across the court. There was something like the outline of a great carriage discernible on the road behind the stranger, and, above that, a few black pinetops, like so many plumes.

"Master Will?" asked the new-comer, in brief military fashion.

"That same, sir," answered Will. "Can I do anything to serve you?"

"I have heard you much spoken of, Master Will," returned the other; "much spoken of, and well. And though I have both hands full of business, I wish to drink a bottle of wine with you in your arbor. Before I go, I shall introduce myself."

Will led the way to the trellis, and got a lamp lighted and a bottle uncorked. He was not altogether unused to such complimentary interviews, and hoped little enough from this one, being schooled by many disappointments. A sort of cloud had settled on his wits and prevented him from remembering the strangeness of the hour. He moved like a person in his sleep; and it seemed as if the lamp caught fire and the bottle came uncorked with the facility of thought. Still, he had some curiosity about the appearance of his visitor, and tried in vain to turn the light into his face; either he handled the lamp clumsily, or there was a dimness over his eyes; but he could make out little more than a shadow at table with him. He stared and stared at this shadow, as he wiped out the glasses, and began to feel cold and strange about the heart. The silence weighed upon him, for he could hear nothing now, not even the river, but the drumming of his own arteries in his ears.

"Here's to you," said the stranger roughly.

"Here is my service, sir," replied Will, sipping his wine, which somehow tasted oddly.

"I understand you are a very positive fellow," pursued the stranger.

Will made answer with a smile of some satisfaction and a little nod.

"So am I," continued the other; "and it is the delight of my heart to tramp on people's corns. I will have nobody positive but myself; not one. I have crossed the whims, in my time, of kings and generals and great artists,

And what would you say," he went on, "if I had come up here on purpose to cross yours?"

Will had it on his tongue to make a sharp rejoinder; but the politeness of an old innkeeper prevailed; and he held his peace and made answer with a civil gesture of the hand.

"I have," said the stranger. "And if I did not hold you in a particular esteem, I should make no words about the matter. It appears you pride yourself on staying where you are. You mean to stick by your inn. Now I mean you shall come for a turn with me in my barouche; and before this bottle's empty, so you shall."

"That would be an odd thing, to be sure," replied Will, with a chuckle. "Why, sir, I have grown here like an old oak tree; the Devil himself could hardly root me up; and for all I perceive you are a very entertaining old gentleman, I would wager you another bottle you lose your pains with me."

The dimness of Will's eyesight had been increasing all this while; but he was somehow conscious of a sharp and chilling scrutiny which irritated and yet overmastered him.

"You need not think," he broke out suddenly, in an explosive, febrile manner that startled and alarmed himself, "that I am a stay-at-home, because I fear anything under God. God knows I am tired enough of it all; and when the time comes for a longer journey than ever you dream of, I reckon I shall find myself prepared."

The stranger emptied his glass and pushed it away from him. He looked down for a little, and then, leaning over the table, tapped Will three times upon the forearm with a single finger. "The time has come!" he said solemnly.

An ugly thrill spread from the spot he touched. The tones of his voice were dull and startling, and echoed strangely in Will's heart.



"I beg your pardon," he said, with some discomposure.  
"What do you mean?"

"Look at me, and you will find your eyesight swim. Raise your hand; it is dead-heavy. This is your last bottle of wine, Master Will, and your last night upon 5 the earth."

"You are a doctor?" quavered Will.

"The best that ever was," replied the other; "for I cure both mind and body with the same prescription. I take away all pain and I forgive all sins; and where my 10 patients have gone wrong in life, I smooth out all complications and set them free again upon their feet."

"I have no need of you," said Will.

"A time comes for all men, Master Will," replied the doctor, "when the helm is taken out of their hands. For 15 you, because you were prudent and quiet, it has been long of coming, and you have had long to discipline yourself for its reception. You have seen what is to be seen about your mill; you have sat close all your days like a hare in its form; but now that is at an end; and," added the doctor, 20 getting on his feet, "you must arise and come with me."

"You are a strange physician," said Will, looking steadfastly upon his guest.

"I am a natural law," he replied, "and people call me Death." 25

"Why did you not tell me so at first?" cried Will. "I have been waiting for you these many years. Give me your hand, and welcome."

"Lean upon my arm," said the stranger, "for already your strength abates. Lean on me heavily as you need; 30 for though I am old, I am very strong. It is but three steps to my carriage, and there all your trouble ends. Why, Will," he added, "I have been yearning for you as if you were my own son; and of all the men that ever I

came for in my long days, I have come for you most gladly. I am caustic, and sometimes offend people at first sight; but I am a good friend at heart to such as you."

"Since Marjory was taken," returned Will, "I declare  
5 before God you were the only friend I had to look for."

So the pair went arm in arm across the court-yard.

One of the servants awoke about this time and heard the noise of horses pawing before he dropped asleep again; all down the valley that night there was a rushing as of a  
10 smooth and steady wind descending towards the plain; and when the world rose next morning, sure enough Will o' the Mill had gone at last upon his travels.

## THE SIRE DE MALETROIT'S DOOR

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

DENIS DE BEAULIEU was not yet two-and-twenty, but he counted himself a grown man, and a very accomplished cavalier into the bargain. Lads were early formed in that rough, warfaring epoch; and when one has been in a pitched battle and a dozen raids, has killed one's man in an honorable fashion, and knows a thing or two of strategy and mankind, a certain swagger in the gait is surely to be pardoned. He had put up his horse with due care, and supped with due deliberation; and then, in a very agreeable frame of mind, went out to pay a visit in the gray of the evening. It was not a very wise proceeding on the young man's part. He would have done better to remain beside the fire or go decently to bed. For the town was full of troops of Burgundy and England under a mixed command; and though Denis was there on safe-conduct, his safe-conduct was like to serve him little on a chance encounter.

It was September, 1429; the weather had fallen sharp; a flighty piping wind, laden with showers, beat about the township; and the dead leaves ran riot along the streets. Here and there a window was already lighted up; and the noise of men-at-arms making merry over supper within, came forth in fits and was swallowed up and carried away by the wind. The night fell swiftly; the flag of England, fluttering on the spire top, grew ever fainter and fainter against the flying clouds—a black speck like a swallow in the tumultuous, leaden chaos of the sky. As the night fell

the wind rose, and began to hoot under archways and roar amid the tree-tops in the valley below the town.

Denis de Beaulieu walked fast and was soon knocking at his friend's door; but though he promised himself to  
5 stay only a little while and make an early return, his welcome was so pleasant, and he found so much to delay him, that it was already long past midnight before he said good-bye upon the threshold. The wind had fallen again in the meanwhile; the night was as black as the grave;  
10 not a star, nor a glimmer of moonshine, slipped through the canopy of cloud. Denis was ill-acquainted with the intricate lanes of Chateau Landon; even by daylight he had found some trouble in picking his way; and in this absolute darkness he soon lost it altogether. He was  
15 certain of one thing only—to keep mounting the hill; for his friend's house lay at the lower end, or tail, of Chateau Landon, while the inn was up at the head, under the great church spire. With this clew to go upon he stumbled and groped forward, now breathing more freely in the open  
20 places where there was a good slice of sky overhead, now feeling along the wall in stifling closes. It is an eerie and mysterious position to be thus submerged in opaque blackness in an almost unknown town. The silence is terrifying in its possibilities. The touch of cold window bars to  
25 the exploring hand startles the man like a touch of a toad; the inequalities of the pavement shake his heart into his mouth; a piece of denser darkness threatens an ambushade or a chasm in the pathway; and where the air is brighter, the houses put on strange and bewildering appearances, as  
30 if to lead him further from his way. For Denis, who had to regain his inn without attracting notice, there was real danger as well as mere discomfort in the walk; and he went warily and boldly at once, and at every corner paused to make an observation.

He had been for some time threading a lane so narrow that he could touch a wall with either hand, when it began to open out and go sharply downward. Plainly this lay no longer in the direction of his inn; but the hope of a little more light tempted him forward to reconnoiter. The lane 5 ended in a terrace with a bartizan wall, which gave an outlook between high houses, as out of an embrasure, into the valley lying dark and formless several hundred feet below. Denis looked down, and could discern a few tree-tops waving and a single speck of brightness where the river ran 10 across a weir. The weather was clearing up, and the sky had lightened, so as to show the outline of the heavier clouds and the dark margin of the hills. By the uncertain glimmer, the house on his left hand should be a place of some pretensions; it was surmounted by several pinnacles 15 and turret-tops; the round stern of a chapel, with a fringe of flying buttresses, projected boldly from the main block; and the door was sheltered under a deep porch carved with figures and overhung by two long gargoyles. The windows of the chapel gleamed through their intricate 20 tracery with a light as of many tapers, and threw out the buttresses and the peaked roof in a more intense blackness against the sky. It was plainly the hotel of some great family of the neighborhood; and as it reminded Denis of a town house of his own at Bourges, he stood for some 25 time gazing up at it and mentally gauging the skill of the architects and the consideration of the two families.

There seemed to be no issue to the terrace but the lane by which he had reached it; he could only retrace his steps, but he had gained some notion of his whereabouts, and 30 hoped by this means to hit the main thoroughfare and speedily regain the inn. He was reckoning without that chapter of accidents which was to make this night memorable above all others in his career; for he had not gone

back above a hundred yards before he saw a light coming to meet him, and heard loud voices speaking together in the echoing narrows of the lane. It was a party of men-at-arms going the night round with torches. Denis assured  
5 himself that they had all been making free with the wine-bowl, and were in no mood to be particular about safe-conducts or the niceties of chivalrous war. It was as like as not that they would kill him like a dog and leave him where he fell. The situation was inspiriting but nervous.  
10 Their own torches would conceal him from sight, he reflected; and he hoped that they would drown the noise of his footsteps with their own empty voices. If he were but fleet and silent, he might evade their notice altogether.

Unfortunately, as he turned to beat a retreat, his foot  
15 rolled upon a pebble; he fell against the wall with an ejaculation, and his sword rung loudly on the stones. Two or three voices demanded who went there—some in French, some in English; but Denis made no reply, and ran the faster down the lane. Once upon the terrace, he paused  
20 to look back. They still kept calling after him, and just then began to double the pace in pursuit, with a considerable clank of armor, and great tossing of the torchlight to and fro in the narrow jaws of the passage.

Denis cast a look around and darted into the porch.  
25 There he might escape observation, or—if that were too much to expect—was in a capital posture whether for parley or defense. So thinking, he drew his sword and tried to set his back against the door. To his surprise it yielded behind his weight; and though he turned in a moment,  
30 continued to swing back on oiled and noiseless hinges until it stood wide open on a black interior. When things fall out opportunely for the person concerned, he is not apt to be critical about the how or why, his own immediate personal convenience seeming a sufficient reason for the

strangest oddities and revolutions in our sublunary things; and so Denis, without a moment's hesitation, stepped within, and partly closed the door behind him to conceal his place of refuge. Nothing was further from his thoughts than to close it altogether; but for some inexplicable reason—perhaps by a spring or a weight—the ponderous mass of oak whipped itself out of his fingers and clanked to, with a formidable rumble and a noise like the falling of an automatic bar. 5

The round, at that very moment, debouched upon the terrace and proceeded to summon him with shouts and curses. He heard them ferreting in the dark corners; the stock of a lance even rattled along the outer surface of the door behind which he stood; but these gentlemen were in too high a humor to be long delayed, and soon made off down a corkscrew pathway which had escaped Denis' observation, and passed out of sight and hearing along the battlements of the town. 10 15

Denis breathed again. He gave them a few minutes' grace for fear of accidents, and then groped about for some means of opening the door and slipping forth again. The inner surface was quite smooth, not a handle, not a molding, not a projection of any sort. He got his fingernails round the edges and pulled, but the mass was immovable. He shook it, it was as firm as a rock. Denis de Beaulieu frowned and gave vent to a little noiseless whistle. What ailed the door, he wondered. Why was it open? How came it to shut so easily and so effectually after him? There was something obscure and underhand about all this, that was little to the young man's fancy. It looked like a snare, and yet who could suppose a snare in such a quiet by-street and in a house of so prosperous and even noble an exterior? And yet—snare or no snare, intentionally or unintentionally—here he was, prettily trapped; and 20 25 30

for the life of him he could see no way out of it again. The darkness began to weigh upon him. He gave ear; all was silent without, but within and close by he seemed to catch a faint sighing, a faint sobbing rustle, a little stealthy  
5 creak—as though many persons were at his side, holding themselves quite still, and governing even their respiration with the extreme of slyness. The idea went to his vitals with a shock, and he faced about suddenly as if to defend his life. Then, for the first time, he became aware of a  
10 light about the level of his eyes and at some distance in the interior of the house—a vertical thread of light, widening toward the bottom, such as might escape between two wings of arras over a doorway.

To see anything was a relief to Denis; it was like a  
15 piece of solid ground to a man laboring in a morass; his mind seized upon it with avidity; and he stood staring at it and trying to piece together some logical conception of his surroundings. Plainly there was a flight of steps ascending from his own level to that of this illuminated doorway,  
20 and indeed he thought he could make out another thread of light, as fine as a needle and as faint as phosphorescence, which might very well be reflected along the polished wood of a handrail. Since he had begun to suspect that he was not alone, his heart had continued to beat with  
25 smothering violence, and an intolerable desire for action of any sort had possessed itself of his spirit. He was in deadly peril, he believed. What could be more natural than to mount the staircase, lift the curtain, and confront his difficulty at once? At least he would be dealing with  
30 something tangible; at least he would be no longer in the dark. He stepped slowly forward with outstretched hands, until his foot struck the bottom step; then he rapidly scaled the stairs, stood for a moment to compose his expression, lifted the arras and went in.



He found himself in a large apartment of polished stone. There were three doors; one on each of three sides; all similarly curtained with tapestry. The fourth side was occupied by two large windows and a great stone chimney-piece, carved with the arms of the Maletroits. Denis 5 recognized the bearings, and was gratified to find himself in such good hands. The room was strongly illuminated; but it contained little furniture except a heavy table and a chair or two, the hearth was innocent of fire, and the pavement was but sparsely strewn with rushes clearly 10 many days old.

On a high chair beside the chimney, and directly facing Denis as he entered, sat a little old gentleman in a fur tippet. He sat with his legs crossed and his hands folded, and a cup of spiced wine stood by his elbow on a bracket on 15 the wall. His countenance had a strong masculine cast; not properly human, but such as we see in the bull, the goat, or the domestic boar; something equivocal and wheedling, something greedy, brutal, and dangerous. The upper lip was inordinately full, as though swollen by a 20 blow or a toothache; and the smile, the peaked eyebrows, and the small, strong eyes were quaintly and almost comically evil in expression. Beautiful white hair hung straight all round his head, like a saint's, and fell in a single curl upon the tippet. His beard and mustache were 25 the pink of venerable sweetness. Age, probably in consequence of inordinate precautions, had left no mark upon his hands; and the Maletroit hand was famous. It would be difficult to imagine anything at once so fleshy and so delicate in design; the taper, sensual fingers were like those 30 of one of Leonardo's women; the fork of the thumb made a dimpled protuberance when closed; the nails were perfectly shaped, and of a dead, surprising whiteness. It rendered his aspect tenfold more redoubtable, that a man

with hands like these should keep them devoutly folded like a virgin martyr—that a man with so intent and startling an expression of face should sit patiently on his seat and contemplate people with an unwinking stare, like a  
5 god, or a god's statue. His quiescence seemed ironical and treacherous, it fitted so poorly with his looks.

Such was Alain, Sire de Maletroit.

Denis and he looked silently at each other for a second or two.

10 “Pray step in,” said the Sire de Maletroit. “I have been expecting you all the evening.”

He had not risen but he accompanied his words with a smile and a slight but courteous inclination of the head. Partly from the smile, partly from the strange musical  
15 murmur with which the sire prefaced his observation, Denis felt a strong shudder of disgust go through his marrow. And what with disgust and honest confusion of mind, he could scarcely get words together in reply.

“I fear,” he said, “that this is a double accident. I am  
20 not the person you suppose me. It seems you were looking for a visit; but for my part, nothing was further from my thoughts—nothing could be more contrary to my wishes—than this intrusion.”

“Well, well,” replied the old gentleman indulgently,  
25 “here you are, which is the main point. Seat yourself, my friend, and put yourself entirely at your ease. We shall arrange our little affairs presently.”

Denis perceived that the matter was still complicated with some misconception, and he hastened to continue his  
30 explanations.

“Your door,” he began.

“About my door?” asked the other, raising his peaked eyebrows. “A little piece of ingenuity.” And he shrugged his shoulders. “A hospitable fancy! By your own ac-

count, you were not desirous of making my acquaintance. We old people look for such reluctance now and then; when it touches our honor, we cast about until we find some way of overcoming it. You arrive uninvited, but believe me, very welcome."

"You persist in error, sir," said Denis. "There can be no question between you and me. I am a stranger in this countryside. My name is Denis, damoiseau de Beaulieu. If you see me in your house it is only——"

"My young friend," interrupted the other, "you will permit me to have my own ideas on that subject. They probably differ from yours at the present moment," he added with a leer, "but time will show which of us is in the right."

Denis was convinced he had to do with a lunatic. He seated himself with a shrug, content to wait the upshot; and a pause ensued, during which he thought he could distinguish a hurried gabbling as of a prayer from behind the arras immediately opposite him. Sometimes there seemed to be but one person engaged, sometimes two; and the vehemence of the voice, low as it was, seemed to indicate either great haste or an agony of spirit. It occurred to him that this piece of tapestry covered the entrance to the chapel he had noticed from without.

The old gentleman meanwhile surveyed Denis from head to foot with a smile, and from time to time emitted little noises like a bird or a mouse, which seemed to indicate a high degree of satisfaction. This state of matters became rapidly insupportable; and Denis, to put an end to it, remarked politely that the wind had gone down.

The old gentleman fell into a fit of silent laughter, so prolonged and violent that he became quite red in the face. Denis got upon his feet at once, and put on his hat with a flourish.

"Sir," he said, "if you are in your wits, you have affronted me grossly. If you are out of them, I flatter myself I can find better employment for my brains than to talk with lunatics. My conscience is clear; you have made  
5 a fool of me from the first moment; you have refused to hear my explanations; and now there is no power under God will make me stay here any longer; and if I cannot make my way out in a more decent fashion, I will hack your door in pieces with my sword."

10 The Sire de Maletroit raised his right hand and wagged it at Denis with the fore and little fingers extended.

"My dear nephew," he said, "sit down."

"Nephew!" retorted Denis, "you lie in your throat;" and he snapped his fingers in his face.

15 "Sit down, you rogue!" cried the old gentleman, in a sudden, harsh voice, like the barking of a dog. "Do you fancy," he went on, "that when I had made my little contrivance for the door I had stopped short with that? If you prefer to be bound hand and foot till your bones ache,  
20 rise and try to go away. If you choose to remain a free young buck, agreeably conversing with an old gentleman—why, sit where you are in peace, and God be with you."

"Do you mean I am a prisoner?" demanded Denis.

"I state the facts," replied the other. "I would rather  
25 leave the conclusion to yourself."

Denis sat down again. Externally he managed to keep pretty calm, but within, he was now boiling with anger, now chilled with apprehension. He no longer felt convinced that he was dealing with a madman. And if the old  
30 gentleman was sane, what, in God's name, had he to look for? What absurd or tragical adventure had befallen him? What countenance was he to assume?

While he was thus unpleasantly reflecting, the arras that overhung the chapel door was raised, and a tall priest in

his robes came forth, and, giving a long, keen stare at Denis, said something in an undertone to Sire de Maletroit.

"She is in a better frame of spirit?" asked the latter.

"She is more resigned, messire," replied the priest.

"Now, the Lord help her, she is hard to please!" sneered the old gentleman. "A likely stripling—not ill-born—and of her own choosing, too! Why, what more would the jade have?" 5

"The situation is not usual for a young damsel," said the other, "and somewhat trying to her blushes." 10

"She should have thought of that before she began the dance! It was none of my choosing, God knows that; but since she is in it, by our Lady, she shall carry it to the end." And then addressing Denis, "Monsieur de Beau-lieu," he asked, "may I present you to my niece? She has 15 been waiting your arrival, I may say, with even greater impatience than myself."

Denis had resigned himself with a good grace—all he desired was to know the worst of it as speedily as possible; so he rose at once, and bowed in acquiescence. The Sire 20 de Maletroit followed his example and limped, with the assistance of the chaplain's arm, toward the chapel door. The priest pulled aside the arras, and all three entered. The building had considerable architectural pretensions. A light groining sprung from six stout columns, and hung 25 down in two rich pendants from the center of the vault. The place terminated behind the altar in a round end, embossed and honeycombed with a superfluity of ornament in relief, and pierced by many little windows shaped like stars, trefoils, or wheels. These windows were imperfectly 30 glazed, so that the night air circulated freely in the chapel. The tapers, of which there must have been half a hundred burning on the altar, were unmercifully blown about; and the light went through many different phases of brilliancy

and semi-eclipse. On the steps in front of the altar knelt a young girl richly attired as a bride. A chill settled over Denis as he observed her costume; he fought with desperate energy against the conclusion that was being thrust upon  
5 his mind; it could not—it should not—be as he feared.

“Blanche,” said the sire, in his most flute-like tones, “I have brought a friend to see you, my little girl; turn round and give him your pretty hand. It is good to be devout; but it is necessary to be polite, my niece.”

10 The girl rose to her feet and turned toward the newcomers. She moved all of a piece; and shame and exhaustion were expressed in every line of her fresh young body; and she held her head down and kept her eyes upon the pavement, as she came slowly forward. In the course of  
15 her advance her eyes fell upon Denis de Beaulieu’s feet—feet of which he was justly vain, he it remarked, and wore in the most elegant accouterment even while traveling. She paused—started, as if his yellow boots had conveyed some shocking meaning—and glanced suddenly up into the  
20 wearer’s countenance. Their eyes met; shame gave place to horror and terror in her looks; the blood left her lips, with a piercing scream she covered her face with her hands and sank upon the chapel floor.

“That is not the man!” she cried. “My uncle, that is  
25 not the man!”

The Sire de Maletroit chirped agreeably. “Of course not,” he said; “I expected as much. It was so unfortunate you could not remember his name.”

“Indeed,” she cried, “indeed, I have never seen this  
30 person till this moment—I have never so much as set eyes upon him—I never wish to see him again. Sir,” she said, turning to Denis, “if you are a gentleman, you will bear me out. Have I ever seen you—have you ever seen me—before this accursed hour?”

"To speak for myself, I have never had that pleasure," answered the young man. "This is the first time, messire, that I have met with your engaging niece."

The old gentleman shrugged his shoulders.

"I am distressed to hear it," he said. "But it is never 5 too late to begin. I had little more acquaintance with my own late lady ere I married her; which proves," he added, with a grimace, "that these impromptu marriages may often produce an excellent understanding in the long run. As the bridegroom is to have a voice in the matter, I will 10 give him two hours to make up for lost time before we proceed with the ceremony." And he turned toward the door, followed by the clergyman.

The girl was on her feet in a moment. "My uncle, you cannot be in earnest," she said. "I declare before God I 15 will stab myself rather than be forced on that young man. The heart rises at it; God forbids such marriages; you dishonor your white hair. Oh, my uncle, pity me! There is not a woman in all the world but would prefer death to such a nuptial. Is it possible," she added, faltering— 20 "is it possible that you do not believe me—that you still think this"—and she pointed at Denis with a tremor of anger and contempt—"that you still think *this* to be the man?"

"Frankly," said the old gentleman, pausing on the 25 threshold, "I do. But let me explain to you once for all, Blanche de Maletroit, my way of thinking about this affair. When you took it into your head to dishonor my family and the name that I have borne, in peace and war, for more than threescore years, you forfeited, not only the 30 right to question my designs, but that of looking me in the face. If your father had been alive, he would have spat on you and turned you out of doors. His was the hand of iron. You may bless your God you have only to deal with

the hand of velvet, mademoiselle. It was my duty to get you married without delay. Out of pure good-will, I have tried to find your own gallant for you. And I believe I have succeeded. But before God and all the holy angels, 5 Blanche de Maletroit, if I have not, I care not one jack-straw. So let me recommend you to be polite to our young friend; for, upon my word, your next groom may be less appetizing."

And with that he went out, with the chaplain at his 10 heels; and the arras fell behind the pair.

The girl turned upon Denis with flashing eyes.

"And what, sir," she demanded, "may be the meaning of all this?"

"God knows," returned Denis, gloomily. "I am a prisoner in this house, which seems full of mad people. More 15 I know not; and nothing do I understand."

"And pray how came you here?" she asked.

He told her as briefly as he could. "For the rest," he added, "perhaps you will follow my example, and tell me 20 the answer to all these riddles, and what, in God's name, is like to be the end of it."

She stood silent for a little, and he could see her lips tremble and her tearless eyes burn with a feverish luster. Then she pressed her forehead in both hands.

25 "Alas, how my head aches!" she said, wearily—"to say nothing of my poor heart! But it is due to you to know my story, unmaidenly as it must seem. I am called Blanche de Maletroit; I have been without father or mother for—oh! for as long as I can recollect, and indeed I 30 have been most unhappy all my life. Three months ago a young captain began to stand near me every day in church. I could see that I pleased him; I am much to blame, but I was so glad that any one should love me; and when he passed me a letter, I took it home with me and read it



with great pleasure. Since that time he has written many. He was so anxious to speak with me, poor fellow! and kept asking me to leave the door open some evening that we might have two words upon the stair. For he knew how much my uncle trusted me." She gave something like a sob at that, and it was a moment before she could go on. "My uncle is a hard man, but he is very shrewd," she said at last. "He has performed many feats in war, and was a great person at court, and much trusted by Queen Isabeau in old days. How he came to suspect me I cannot tell; but it is hard to keep anything from his knowledge; and this morning, as we came from mass, he took my hand in his, forced it open, and read my little billet, walking by my side all the while.

"When he finished, he gave it back to me with great politeness. It contained another request to have the door left open; and this has been the ruin of us all. My uncle kept me strictly in my room until evening, and then ordered me to dress myself as you see me—a hard mockery for a young girl, do you not think so? I suppose, when he could not prevail with me to tell him the young captain's name, he must have laid a trap for him; into which, alas! you have fallen in the anger of God. I looked for much confusion; for how could I tell whether he was willing to take me for his wife on these sharp terms? He might have been trifling with me from the first; or I might have made myself too cheap in his eyes. But truly I had not looked for such a shameful punishment as this! I could not think that God would let a girl be so disgraced before a young man. And now I tell you all; and I can scarcely hope that you will not despise me."

Denis made her a respectful inclination.

"Madam," he said, "you have honored me by your confidence. It remains for me to prove that I am not

unworthy of the honor. Is Messire de Maletroit at hand?"

"I believe he is writing in the salle without," she answered.

5 "May I lead you thither, madam?" asked Denis, offering his hand with his most courtly bearing.

She accepted it; and the pair passed out of the chapel, Blanche in a very drooping and shamefast condition, but Denis strutting and ruffling in the consciousness of a mission, and the boyish certainty of accomplishing it with  
10 honor.

The Sire de Maletroit rose to meet them with an ironical obeisance.

"Sir," said Denis, with the grandest possible air, "I  
15 believe I am to have some say in the matter of this marriage; and let me tell you at once, I will be no party to forcing the inclination of this young lady. Had it been freely offered to me, I should have been proud to accept her hand, for I perceive she is as good as she is beautiful;  
20 but as things are, I have now the honor, messire, of refusing."

Blanche looked at him with gratitude in her eyes; but the old gentleman only smiled and smiled, until his smile grew positively sickening to Denis.

25 "I am afraid," he said, "Monsieur de Beaulieu, that you do not perfectly understand the choice I have offered you. Follow me, I beseech you, to this window." And he led the way to one of the large windows which stood open on the night. "You observe," he went on, "there is an iron  
30 ring in the upper masonry, and reeved through that, a very efficacious rope. Now, mark my words: if you should find your disinclination to my niece's person insurmountable, I shall have you hanged out of this window before sunrise. I shall only proceed to such an extremity with the greatest

regret, you may believe me. For it is not at all your death that I desire, but my niece's establishment in life. At the same time, it must come to that if you prove obstinate. Your family, Monsieur de Beaulieu, is very well in its way, but if you sprung from Charlemagne, you should not refuse the hand of a Maletroit with impunity—not if she had been as common as the Paris road—not if she was as hideous as the gargoyle over my door. Neither my niece nor you, nor my own private feelings, move me at all in this matter. The honor of my house has been compromised; I believe you to be the guilty person, at least you are now in the secret; and you can hardly wonder if I request you to wipe out the stain. If you will not, your blood be on your own head! It will be no great satisfaction to me to have your interesting relics kicking their heels in the breeze below my windows, but half a loaf is better than no bread, and if I cannot cure the dishonor, I shall at least stop the scandal."

There was a pause.

"I believe there are other ways of settling such imbroglions among gentlemen," said Denis. "You wear a sword, and I hear you have used it with distinction."

The Sire de Maletroit made a signal to the chaplain, who crossed the room with long silent strides and raised the arras over the third of the three doors. It was only a moment before he let it fall again; but Denis had time to see a dusky passage full of armed men.

"When I was a little younger, I should have been delighted to honor you, Monsieur de Beaulieu," said Sire Alain; "but I am now too old. Faithful retainers are the sinews of age, and I must employ the strength I have. This is one of the hardest things to swallow as a man grows up in years; but with a little patience, even this becomes habitual. You and the lady seem to prefer the

salle for what remains of your two hours; and as I have no desire to cross your preference, I shall resign it to your use with all the pleasure in the world. No haste!" he added, holding up his hand, as he saw a dangerous look come into  
5 Denis de Beaulieu's face. "If your mind revolt against hanging, it will be time enough two hours hence to throw yourself out of the window or upon the pikes of my retainers. Two hours of life are always two hours. A great many things may turn up in even as little a while  
10 as that. And, besides, if I understand her appearance, my niece has something to say to you. You will not disfigure your last hours by a want of politeness to a lady?"

Denis looked at Blanche, and she made him an imploring  
15 gesture.

It is likely that the old gentleman was hugely pleased at this symptom of an understanding; for he smiled on both, and added sweetly: "If you will give me your word of honor, Monsieur de Beaulieu, to await my return at the  
20 end of the two hours before attempting anything desperate, I shall withdraw my retainers, and let you speak in greater privacy with mademoiselle."

Denis again glanced at the girl, who seemed to beseech him to agree.

25 "I give you my word of honor," he said.

Messire de Maletroit bowed, and proceeded to limp about the apartment, clearing his throat the while with that odd musical chirp which had already grown so irritating in the ears of Denis de Beaulieu. He first possessed  
30 himself of some papers which lay upon the table; then he went to the mouth of the passage and appeared to give an order to the men behind the arras; and lastly he hobbled out through the door by which Denis had come in, turning upon the threshold to address a last smiling bow to the

young couple, and followed by the chaplain with a hand-lamp.

No sooner were they alone than Blanche advanced toward Denis with her hands extended. Her face was flushed and excited, and her eyes shone with tears.

"You shall not die!" she cried, "you shall marry me after all."

"You seem to think, madam," replied Denis, "that I stand much in fear of death."

"Oh, no, no," she said, "I see you are no poltroon. It is for my own sake—I could not bear to have you slain for such a scruple."

"I am afraid," returned Denis, "that you underrate the difficulty, madam. What you may be too generous to refuse, I may be too proud to accept. In a moment of noble feeling toward me, you forget what you perhaps owe to others."

He had the decency to keep his eyes on the floor as he said this, and after he had finished, so as not to spy upon her confusion. She stood silent for a moment, then walked suddenly away, and falling on her uncle's chair, fairly burst out sobbing. Denis was in the acme of embarrassment. He looked round, as if to seek for inspiration, and seeing a stool, plumped down upon it for something to do. There he sat, playing with the guard of his rapier, and, wishing himself dead a thousand times over, and buried in the nastiest kitchen-heap in France. His eyes wandered round the apartment, but found nothing to arrest them. There were such wide spaces between the furniture, the light fell so badly and cheerlessly over all, the dark outside air looked in so coldly through the windows, that he thought he had never seen a church so vast, nor a tomb so melancholy. The regular sobs of Blanche de Maletroit measured out the time like the ticking of a clock. He read

the device upon the shield over and over again, until his eyes became obscured; he stared into shadowy corners until he imagined they were swarming with horrible animals; and every now and again he awoke with a start, to  
5 remember that his last two hours were running, and death was on the march.

Oftener and oftener, as the time went on, did his glance settle on the girl herself. Her face was bowed forward and covered with her hands, and she was shaken at intervals  
10 by the convulsive hiccough of grief. Even thus she was not an unpleasant object to dwell upon, so plump and yet so fine, with a warm brown skin, and the most beautiful hair, Denis thought, in the whole world of womankind. Her hands were like her uncle's: but they were more in  
15 place at the end of her young arms, and looked infinitely soft and caressing. He remembered how her blue eyes had shone upon him, full of anger, pity, and innocence. And the more he dwelt on her perfections, the uglier death looked, and the more deeply was he smitten with penitence  
20 at her continued tears. Now he felt that no man could have the courage to leave a world which contained so beautiful a creature; and now he would have given forty minutes of his last hour to have unsaid his cruel speech.

Suddenly a hoarse and ragged peal of cockcrow rose to  
25 their ears from the dark valley below the windows. And this shattering noise in the silence of all around was like a light in a dark place, and shook them both out of their reflections.

"Alas, can I do nothing to help you?" she said, looking  
30 up.

"Madam," replied Denis, with a fine irrelevancy, "if I have said anything to wound you, believe me, it was for your own sake and not for mine."

She thanked him with a tearful look.

"I feel your position cruelly," he went on. "The world has been bitter hard on you. Your uncle is a disgrace to mankind. Believe me, madam, there is no young gentleman in all France but would be glad of my opportunity, to die in doing you a momentary service."

5

"I know already that you can be very brave and generous," she answered. "What I *want* to know is whether I can serve you—now or afterward," she added, with a quaver.

"Most certainly," he answered, with a smile. "Let me sit beside you as if I were a friend, instead of a foolish intruder; try to forget how awkwardly we are placed to one another; make my last moments go pleasantly; and you will do me the chief service possible."

"You are very gallant," she added, with a yet deeper sadness—"very gallant—and it somehow pains me. But draw nearer, if you please; and if you find anything to say to me, you will at least make certain of a very friendly listener. Ah! Monsieur de Beaulieu," she broke forth—"ah! Monsieur de Beaulieu, how can I look you in the face?" And she fell to weeping again with a renewed effusion.

20

"Madam," said Denis, taking her hand in both of his, "reflect on the little time I have before me, and the great bitterness into which I am cast by the sight of your distress. Spare me, in my last moments, the spectacle of what I cannot cure even with the sacrifice of my life."

25

"I am very selfish," answered Blanche. "I will be braver, Monsieur de Beaulieu, for your sake. But think if I can do you no kindness in the future—if you have no friends to whom I could carry your adieus. Charge me as heavily as you can; every burden will lighten, by so little, the invaluable gratitude I owe you. Put it in my power to do something more for you than weep."

30

"My mother is married again, and has a young family to care for. My brother Guichard will inherit my fiefs; and if I am not in error, that will content him amply for my death. Life is a little vapor that passeth away, as we  
5 are told by those in holy orders. When a man is in a fair way and sees all life open in front of him, he seems to himself to make a very important figure in the world. His horse whinnies to him; the trumpets blow and the girls look out of window as he rides into town before his com-  
10 pany; he receives many assurances of trust and regard—sometimes by express in a letter—sometimes face to face, with persons of great consequence falling on his neck. It is not wonderful if his head is turned for a time. But once he is dead, were he as brave as Hercules or as wise as  
15 Solomon, he is soon forgotten. It is not ten years since my father fell, with many other knights around him, in a very fierce encounter, and I do not think that any one of them, nor as much as the name of the fight, is now remembered. No, no, madam, the nearer you come to it, you see that  
20 death is a dark and dusty corner, where a man gets into his tomb and has the door shut after him till the judgment day. I have few friends just now, and once I am dead I shall have none."

"Ah, Monsieur de Beaulieu!" she exclaimed, "you for-  
25 get Blanche de Maletroit."

"You have a sweet nature, madam, and you are pleased to estimate a little service far beyond its worth."

"It is not that," she answered. "You mistake me if you think I am easily touched by my own concerns. I say so  
30 because you are the noblest man I have ever met; because I recognize in you a spirit that would have made even a common person famous in the land."

"And yet here I die in a mousetrap—with no more noise about it than my own squeaking," answered he.



A look of pain crossed her face and she was silent for a little while. Then a light came into her eyes, and with a smile she spoke again.

"I cannot have my champion think meanly of himself. Any one who gives his life for another will be met in Paradise by all the heralds and angels of the Lord God. And you have no such cause to hang your head. For—— Pray, do you think me beautiful?" she asked, with a deep flush. 5

"Indeed, madam, I do," he said. 10

"I am glad of that," she answered heartily. "Do you think there are many men in France who have been asked in marriage by a beautiful maiden—with her own lips—and who have refused her to her face? I know you men would half despise such a triumph; but believe me, we women know more of what is precious in love. There is nothing that should set a person higher in his own esteem; and we women would prize nothing more dearly." 15

"You are very good," he said; "but you cannot make me forget that I was asked in pity and not for love." 20

"I am not so sure of that," she replied, holding down her head. "Hear me to an end, Monsieur de Beaulieu. I know how you must despise me; I feel you are right to do so; I am too poor a creature to occupy one thought of your mind, although, alas! you must die for me this morning. But when I asked you to marry me, indeed, and indeed, it was because I respected and admired you, and loved you with my whole soul, from the very moment that you took my part against my uncle. If you had seen yourself, and how noble you looked, you would pity rather than despise me. And now," she went on, hurriedly checking him with her hand, "although I have laid aside all reserve and told you so much, remember that I know your sentiments toward me already. I would not, believe me, being nobly 25 30

born, weary you with importunities into consent. I too have a pride of my own; and I declare before the holy mother of God, if you should now go back from your word already given, I would no more marry you than I would  
5 marry my uncle's groom."

Denis smiled a little bitterly.

"It is a small love," he said, "that shies at a little pride."

She made no answer, although she probably had her own thoughts.

10 "Come hither to the window," he said with a sigh. "Here is the dawn."

And indeed the dawn was already beginning. The hollow of the sky was full of essential daylight, colorless and clean; and the valley underneath was flooded with a gray  
15 reflection. A few thin vapors clung in the coves of the forest or lay along the winding course of the river. The scene disengaged a surprising effect of stillness, which was hardly interrupted when the cocks began once more to crow among the steadings. Perhaps the same fellow who  
20 had made so horrid a clangor in the darkness not half an hour before, now sent up the merriest cheer to greet the coming day. A little wind went bustling and eddying among the tree-tops underneath the windows. And still the daylight kept flooding insensibly out of the east, which  
25 was soon to grow incandescent and cast up that red-hot cannon-ball, the rising sun.

Denis looked out over all this with a bit of a shiver. He had taken her hand, and retained it in his almost unconsciously.

30 "Has the day begun already?" she said; and then illogically enough: "the night has been so long! Alas! what shall we say to my uncle when he returns?"

"What you will," said Denis, and he pressed her fingers in his.

She was silent.

"Blanche," he said, with a swift, uncertain, passionate utterance, "you have seen whether I fear death. You must know well enough that I would as gladly leap out of that window into the empty air as to lay a finger on you 5 without your free and full consent. But if you care for me at all do not let me lose my life in a misapprehension, for I love you better than the whole world; and though I will die for you blithely, it would be like all the joys of Paradise to live on and spend my life in your service." 10

As he stopped speaking, a bell began to ring loudly in the interior of the house; and a clatter of armor in the corridor showed that the retainers were returning to their post, and the two hours were at an end.

"After all that you have heard?" she whispered, leaning 15 toward him with her lips and eyes.

"I have heard nothing," he replied.

"The captain's name was Florimond de Champdivers," she said in his ear.

"I did not hear it," he answered, taking her supple body 20 in his arms, and covered her wet face with kisses.

A melodious chirping was audible behind, followed by a beautiful chuckle, and the voice of Messire de Maletroit wished his new nephew a good-morning.

## THE COURTING OF T'NOWHEAD'S BELL

By SIR JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE

FOR two years it had been notorious in the square that Sam'l Dickie was thinking of courting T'nowhead's Bell, and that if little Sanders Elshioner (which is the Thrums pronunciation of Alexander Alexander) went in for her, he might prove a formidable rival. Sam'l was a weaver in the Tenements, and Sanders a coal-carter, whose trademark was a bell on his horse's neck that told when coal was coming. Being something of a public man, Sanders had not, perhaps, so high a social position as Sam'l, but he had succeeded his father on the coal-cart, while the weaver had already tried several trades. It had always been against Sam'l, too, that once when the kirk was vacant he had advised the selection of the third minister who preached for it on the ground that it came expensive to pay a large number of candidates. The scandal of the thing was hushed up, out of respect for his father, who was a God-fearing man, but Sam'l was known by it in Lang Tammas' circle. The coal-carter was called Little Sanders to distinguish him from his father, who was not much more than half his size. He had grown up with the name, and its inapplicability now came home to nobody. Sam'l's mother had been more far-seeing than Sanders'. Her man had been called Sammy all his life because it was the name he got as a boy, so when their eldest son was born she spoke of him as Sam'l while still in the cradle. The neighbors imitated her, and thus the young man had a better start in life than had been granted to Sammy, his father.

It was Saturday evening—the night in the week when Auld Licht young men fell in love. Sam'l Dickie, wearing a blue glengarry bonnet with a red ball on the top, came to the door of a one-story house in the Tenements, and stood there wriggling, for he was in a suit of tweed for the first time that week, and did not feel at one with them. When his feeling of being a stranger to himself wore off, he looked up and down the road, which straggles between houses and gardens, and then, picking his way over the puddles, crossed to his father's hen-house and sat down on it. He was now on his way to the square. 5

Eppie Fargus was sitting on an adjoining dyke knitting stockings, and Sam'l looked at her for a time.

"Is't yersel, Eppie?" he said at last.

"It's a' that," said Eppie. 15

"Hoo's <sup>1</sup> a' wi' ye?" asked Sam'l.

"We're juist aff an' on," <sup>2</sup> replied Eppie, cautiously.

There was not much more to say, but as Sam'l sidled off the hen-house, he murmured politely, "Ay, ay." In another minute he would have been fairly started, but Eppie resumed the conversation. 20

"Sam'l," she said, with a twinkle in her eye, "ye can tell Lisbeth Fargus I'll likely be drappin' in on her about Mununday or Teisday."

Lisbeth was sister to Eppie, and wife of Tammas McQuhatty, better known as T'nowhead, which was the name of his farm. She was thus Bell's mistress. 25

Sam'l leaned against the hen-house as if all his desire to depart had gone.

"Hoo d'ye kin <sup>3</sup> I'll be at the T'nowhead the nicht?" <sup>4</sup> he asked, grinning in anticipation. 30

"Ou, I'se warrant ye'll be after Bell," said Eppie.

<sup>1</sup> How is.

<sup>2</sup> *Aff an' on* is "so so"—indifferently well.

<sup>3</sup> Know.

<sup>4</sup> To-night.

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"Am no sae sure o' that," said Sam'l, trying to leer. He was enjoying himself now.

"Am no sure o' that," he repeated, for Eppie seemed lost in stitches.

5 "Sam'l!"

"Ay."

"Ye'll be speirin' <sup>1</sup> her sune noo, I dinna doot?"

This took Sam'l, who had only been courting Bell for a year or two, a little aback.

10 "Hoo d'ye mean, Eppie?" he asked.

"Maybe ye'll do't the nicht."

"Na, there's nae hurry," said Sam'l.

"Weel, we're a' coontin' on't, Sam'l."

"Gae wa wi' ye." <sup>2</sup>

15 "What for no?"

"Gae wa wi' ye," said Sam'l again.

"Bell's gei an' fond <sup>3</sup> o' ye, Sam'l."

"Ay," said Sam'l.

"But am dootin' ye're a fell <sup>4</sup> billy <sup>5</sup> wi' the lasses."

20 "Ay, oh, I d'na kin, moderate, moderate," said Sam'l in high delight.

"I saw ye," said Eppie, speaking with a wire in her mouth, "gae'in on terr'ble wi' Mysy Haggart at the pump last Saturday."

25 "We was juist amoosin' oorsels," said Sam'l.

"It'll be nae amoosement to Mysy," said Eppie, "gin <sup>6</sup> ye brak her heart."

"Losh, <sup>7</sup> Eppie," said Sam'l, "I didna think o' that."

30 "Ye maun <sup>8</sup> kin weel, Sam'l, 'at there's mony a lass wid jump at ye."

<sup>1</sup> Asking.

<sup>3</sup> *Gei an' fond* is "mighty fond."

<sup>6</sup> If.

<sup>2</sup> "Go on with you."

<sup>4</sup> Terrible.

<sup>5</sup> Fellow.

<sup>7</sup> "Lordy" or "Laws."

<sup>8</sup> Must

"Ou, weel," said Sam'l, implying that a man must take these things as they come.

"For ye're a dainty chield to look at, Sam'l."

"Do ye think so, Eppie? Ay, ay; oh, I d'na kin am<sup>1</sup> onything by the ordinar."<sup>2</sup>

"Ye mayna be," said Eppie, "but lasses doesna do to be ower partikler."

Sam'l resented this, and prepared to depart again.

"Ye'll no tell Bell that?" he asked anxiously.

"Tell her what?"

"Aboot me an' Mysy."

"We'll see hoo ye behave yersel, Sam'l."

"No 'at I care, Eppie; ye can tell her gin ye like. I widna think twice o' tellin' her mysel."

"The Lord forgie ye for leein',<sup>3</sup> Sam'l," said Eppie, as he disappeared down Tammy Tosh's close. Here he came upon Henders Webster.

"Ye're late, Sam'l," said Henders.

"What for?"

"Ou, I was thinkin' ye wid be gaen the length o' T'nowhead the nicht, an' I saw Sanders Elshioner makkin's wy<sup>4</sup> there an oor syne."<sup>5</sup>

"Did ye?" cried Sam'l, adding craftily, "but it's naething to me."

"Tod,<sup>6</sup> lad," said Henders, "gin ye dinna buckle to, Sanders'll be carryin' her off."

Sam'l flung back his head and passed on.

"Sam'l!" cried Henders after him.

"Ay," said Sam'l, wheeling round.

"Gie Bell a kiss frae me."

The full force of this joke struck neither all at once. Sam'l began to smile at it as he turned down the school-

<sup>1</sup> I am.

<sup>2</sup> By the ordinar, extraordinary.

<sup>3</sup> Lying.

<sup>4</sup> Way.

<sup>5</sup> Oor syne, hour ago.

<sup>6</sup> "Gosh."

wynd,<sup>1</sup> and it came upon Henders while he was in his garden feeding his ferret. Then he slapped his legs gleefully, and explained the conceit to Will'um Byars, who went into the house and thought it over.

5 There were twelve or twenty little groups of men in the square, which was lit by a flare of oil suspended over a cadger's<sup>2</sup> cart. Now and again a staid young woman passed through the square with a basket on her arm, and if she had lingered long enough to give them time,  
10 some of the idlers would have addressed her. As it was, they gazed after her, and then grinned to each other.

"Ay, Sam'l," said two or three young men, as Sam'l joined them beneath the town-clock.

15 "Ay, Davit," replied Sam'l.

This group was composed of some of the sharpest wits in Thrums, and it was not to be expected that they would let this opportunity pass. Perhaps when Sam'l joined them he knew what was in store for him.

20 "Was ye lookin' for T'nowhead's Bell, Sam'l?" asked one.

"Or mebbe ye was wantin' the minister?" suggested another, the same who had walked out twice with Chirsty Duff and not married her after all.

25 Sam'l could not think of a good reply at the moment, so he laughed good-naturedly.

"Ondootedly she's a snod<sup>3</sup> bit crittur," said Davit, archly.

30 "An' michty clever wi' her fingers," added Jamie Deuchars.

"Man, I've thocht o' makkin' up to Bell mysel," said Pete Ogle. "Wid there be ony chance, think ye, Sam'l?"

<sup>1</sup> Lane.

<sup>2</sup> Huckster.

<sup>3</sup> Trim, tidy.



"I'm thinkin' she widna hae ye for her first, Pete," replied Sam'l, in one of those happy flashes that come to some men, "but there's nae sayin' but what she micht tak ye to finish up wi'."

The unexpectedness of this sally startled every one. 5  
Though Sam'l did not set up for a wit, however, like Davit, it was notorious that he could say a cutting thing once in a way.

"Did ye ever see Bell reddin'<sup>1</sup> up?" asked Pete, recovering from his overthrow. He was a man who bore no 10 malice.

"It's a sicht,"<sup>2</sup> said Sam'l, solemnly.

"Hoo will that be?" asked Jamie Deuchars.

"It's weel worth yer while," said Pete, "to ging atower<sup>3</sup> to the T'nowhead an' see. Ye'll mind the closed-in beds 15 i' the kitchen? Ay, weel, they're a fell spoilt crew, T'nowhead's litlins, an' no that aisy to manage. Th' ither lasses Lisbeth's hae'n had a michty trouble wi' them. When they war i' the middle o' their reddin' up the bairns wid come tumlin' about the floor, but, sal,<sup>4</sup> I assure ye, Bell 20 didna fash<sup>5</sup> lang wi' them. Did she, Sam'l?"

"She did not," said Sam'l, dropping into a fine mode of speech to add emphasis to his remark.

"I'll tell ye what she did," said Pete to the others. "She juist lifted up the litlins, twa at a time, an' flung them 25 into the coffin-beds.<sup>6</sup> Syne she snibbit<sup>7</sup> the doors on them an' keepit them there till the floor was dry."

"Ay, man, did she so?" said Davit, admiringly.

"I've seen her do't mysel," said Sam'l.

"There's no a lassie maks better bannocks<sup>8</sup> this side o' 30 Fetter Lums," continued Pete.

<sup>1</sup> Tidying.

<sup>2</sup> Sight.

<sup>3</sup> Over.

<sup>4</sup> An expletive.

<sup>5</sup> Bother.

<sup>6</sup> The "closed-in beds" mentioned above.

<sup>7</sup> Fastened.

<sup>8</sup> A barley or oatmeal cake baked on a griddle.

"Her mither tocht her that," said Sam'l; "she was a gran' han' at the bakin,' Kitty Ogilvy."

"I've heard say," remarked Jamie, putting it this way so as not to tie himself down to anything, "'at Bell's scones <sup>1</sup> is equal to Mag Lunan's."

"So they are," said Sam'l, almost fiercely.

"I kin she's a neat han' at singein' a hen," said Pete.

"An' wi't a'," said Davit, "she's a snod, canty bit <sup>2</sup> stocky in her Sabbath claes." <sup>3</sup>

"If onything, thick in the waist," suggested Jamie.

"I dinna see that," said Sam'l.

"I d'na care for her hair either," continued Jamie, who was very nice in his tastes; "something mair yallowchy <sup>4</sup> wid be an improvement."

"A'boddy <sup>5</sup> kins," growled Sam'l, "'at black hair's the bonniest,"

The others chuckled.

"Puir Sam'l!" Pete said.

Sam'l not being certain whether this should be received with a smile or a frown, opened his mouth wide as a kind of compromise. This was position one with him for thinking things over.

Few Auld Lights, as I have said, went the length of choosing a helpmate for themselves. One day a young man's friends would see him mending the washing-tub of a maiden's mother. They kept the joke until Saturday night, and then he learned from them what he had been after. It dazed him for a time, but in a year or so he grew accustomed to the idea, and they were then married. With a little help he fell in love just like other people.

<sup>1</sup> A cake thinner than a bannock.

<sup>2</sup> *Canty bit stocky*, cheery little body.

<sup>4</sup> Yellowish.

<sup>3</sup> Clothes.

<sup>5</sup> Everybody.

Sam'l was going the way of the others, but he found it difficult to come to the point. He only went courting once a week, and he could never take up the running at the place where he left off the Saturday before. Thus he had not, so far, made great headway. His method of making up to Bell had been to drop in at T'nowhead on Saturday nights and talk with the farmer about the rinderpest.<sup>1</sup>

The farm kitchen was Bell's testimonial. Its chairs, tables, and stools were scoured by her to the whiteness of Rob Angus' saw-mill boards, and the muslin blind on the window was starched like a child's pinafore. Bell was brave, too, as well as energetic. Once Thrums had been overrun with thieves. It is now thought that there may have been only one, but he had the wicked cleverness of a gang. Such was his repute that there were weavers who spoke of locking their doors when they went from home. He was not very skilful, however, being generally caught, and when they said they knew he was a robber, he gave them their things back and went away. If they had given him time there is no doubt that he would have gone off with his plunder. One night he went to T'nowhead, and Bell, who slept in the kitchen, was awakened by the noise. She knew who it would be, so she rose and dressed herself, and went to look for him with a candle. The thief had not known what to do when he got in, and as it was very lonely he was glad to see Bell. She told him he ought to be ashamed of himself, and would not let him out by the door until he had taken off his boots so as not to soil the carpet.

On this Saturday evening Sam'l stood his ground in the square, until by and by he found himself alone. There were other groups there still, but his circle had melted away. They went separately, and no one said good-night.

<sup>1</sup> Cattle plague.

Each took himself off slowly, backing out of the group until he was fairly started.

[Sam'l looked about him, and then, seeing that the others had gone, walked round the town-house into the darkness  
5 of the brae <sup>1</sup> [that leads down and then up] to the farm of T'nowhead.

[To get into the good graces of Lisbeth Fergus you had to know her ways and humor them. Sam'l, who was a student of women, knew this, and so, instead of pushing  
10 the door open and walking in, he went through the rather ridiculous ceremony of knocking. Sanders Elshioner was also aware of this weakness of Lisbeth's, but though he often made up his mind to knock, the absurdity of the thing prevented his doing so when he reached the door.  
15 T'nowhead himself had never got used to his wife's refined notions, and when any one knocked he always started to his feet, thinking there must be something wrong.]

Lisbeth came to the door, her expansive figure blocking the way in.

20 "Sam'l," she said.

"Lisbeth," said Sam'l.

He shook hands with the farmer's wife, knowing that she liked it, but only said, "Ay, Bell," to his sweetheart, "Ay, T'nowhead," to McQuhatty, and "It's yersel,  
25 Sanders," to his rival.

They were all sitting round the fire; T'nowhead, with his feet on the ribs, wondering why he felt so warm, and Bell darned a stocking, while Lisbeth kept an eye on a goblet <sup>2</sup> full of potatoes.

30 "Sit into <sup>3</sup> the fire, Sam'l," said the farmer, not, however, making way for him.

"Na, na," said Sam'l; "I'm to bide nae time." Then he sat into the fire. His face was turned away from Bell,

<sup>1</sup> Slope of the hill.

<sup>2</sup> A deep sauce-pan.

<sup>3</sup> Up to.

and when she spoke he answered her without looking round. Sam'l felt a little anxious. Sanders Elshioner, who had one leg shorter than the other, but looked well when sitting, seemed suspiciously at home. He asked Bell questions out of his own head, which was beyond 5 Sam'l, and once he said something to her in such a low voice that the others could not catch it. T'nowhead asked curiously what it was, and Sanders explained that he had only said, "Ay, Bell, the morn's the Sabbath." There was nothing startling in this, but Sam'l did not like it. He 10 began to wonder if he were too late, and had he seen his opportunity would have told Bell of a nasty rumor that Sanders intended to go over to the Free Church if they would make him kirk-officer.

[ Sam'l had the good-will of T'nowhead's wife, who liked 15 a polite man. Sanders did his best, but from want of practice he constantly made mistakes. To-night, for instance, he wore his hat in the house because he did not like to put up his hand and take it off. T'nowhead had not taken his off either, but that was because he meant 20 to go out by and by and lock the byre <sup>1</sup> door.] It was impossible to say which of her lovers Bell preferred. The proper course with an Auld Licht lassie was to prefer the man who proposed to her.

"Ye'll bide a wee, an' hae something to eat?" Lisbeth 25 asked Sam'l, with her eyes on the goblet.

"No, I thank ye," said Sam'l, with true gentility.

"Ye'll better."

"I dinna think it."

"Hoots aye; <sup>2</sup> what's to hender ye?" 30

"Weel, since ye're sae pressin', I'll bide."

No one asked Sanders to stay. Bell could not, for she was but the servant, and T'nowhead knew that the kick

<sup>1</sup> Barn or cow-shed.

<sup>2</sup> Hoots aye, "fudge."

his wife had given him meant that he was not to do so either. Sanders whistled to show that he was not uncomfortable.

"Ay, then, I'll be stappin' ower the brae," he said at last.

5 He did not go, however. [There was sufficient pride in him to get him off his chair, but only slowly, for he had to get accustomed to the notion of going. At intervals of two or three minutes he remarked that he must now be going. In the same circumstances Sam'l would have  
10 acted similarly. For a Thrums man, it is one of the hardest things in life to get away from anywhere.]

At last Lisbeth saw that something must be done. The potatoes were burning, and T'nowhead had an invitation on his tongue.

15 "Yes, I'll hae to be movin'," said Sanders, hopelessly, for the fifth time.

"Guid nicht to ye, then, Sanders," said Lisbeth. "Gie the door a fling-to, ahent <sup>1</sup> ye."

Sanders, with a mighty effort, pulled himself together.  
20 He looked boldly at Bell, and then took off his hat carefully. Sam'l saw with misgivings that there was something in it which was not a handkerchief. It was a paper bag glittering with gold braid, and contained such an assortment of sweets as lads bought for their lasses on the Muckle  
25 Friday.

"Hae, Bell," said Sanders, handing the bag to Bell in an off-hand way as if it were but a trifle. Nevertheless he was a little excited, for he went off without saying good-night.

30 No one spoke. Bell's face was crimson. T'nowhead fidgeted on his chair, and Lisbeth looked at Sam'l. The weaver was strangely calm and collected, though he would have liked to know whether this was a proposal.

<sup>1</sup> Behind.

"Sit in by to the table, Sam'l," said Lisbeth, trying to look as if things were as they had been before.

She put a saucerful of butter, salt, and pepper near the fire to melt, for melted butter is the shoeing-horn that helps over a meal of potatoes. Sam'l, however, saw what the hour required, and jumping up, he seized his bonnet. 5

"Hing the tatties <sup>1</sup> higher up the joist, Lisbeth," he said with dignity; "I'se be back in ten meenits."

He hurried out of the house, leaving the others looking at each other. 10

"What do ye think?" asked Lisbeth.

"I d'na kin," faltered Bell.

"Thae tatties is lang o' comin' to the boil," said T'nowhead.

In some circles a lover who behaved like Sam'l would have been suspected of intent upon his rival's life, but neither Bell nor Lisbeth did the weaver that injustice. In a case of this kind it does not much matter what T'nowhead thought. 15

The ten minutes had barely passed when Sam'l was back in the farm kitchen. He was too flurried to knock this time, and, indeed, Lisbeth did not expect it of him. 20

"Bell, hae!" he cried, handing his sweetheart a tinsel bag twice the size of Sanders' gift. 25

"Losh preserve's!" exclaimed Lisbeth; "I'se warrant there's a shillin's worth."

"There's a' that, Lisbeth—an' mair," said Sam'l firmly.

"I thank ye, Sam'l," said Bell, feeling an unwonted elation as she gazed at the two paper bags in her lap. 30

"Ye're ower extravagint, Sam'l," Lisbeth said.

"Not at all," said Sam'l; "not at all. But I widna

<sup>1</sup> Potatoes.

advise ye to eat thae ither anes, Bell—they're second quality."

Bell drew back a step from Sam'l.

"How do ye kin?" asked the farmer shortly, for he  
5 liked Sanders.

"I speired i' the shop," said Sam'l.

The goblet was placed on a broken plate on the table with the saucer beside it, and Sam'l, like the others, helped himself. What he did was to take potatoes from  
10 the pot with his fingers, peel off their coats, and then dip them into the butter. Lisbeth would have liked to provide knives and forks, but she knew that beyond a certain point T'nowhead was master in his own house. As for Sam'l, he felt victory in his hands, and began to think that he had  
15 gone too far.

In the mean time Sanders, little witting that Sam'l had trumped his trick, was sauntering along the kirk-wynd with his hat on the side of his head. Fortunately he did not meet the minister.

20 The courting of T'nowhead's Bell reached its crisis one Sabbath about a month after the events above recorded. The minister was in great force that day, but it is no part of mine to tell how he bore himself. I was there, and am not likely to forget the scene. It was a fateful Sabbath  
25 for T'nowhead's Bell and her swains, and destined to be remembered for the painful scandal which they perpetrated in their passion.

Bell was not in the kirk. [There being an infant of six months in the house it was a question of either Lisbeth  
30 or the lassie's staying at home with him, and though Lisbeth was unselfish in a general way, she could not resist the delight of going to church. She had nine children besides the baby, and being but a woman, it was the pride of her life to march them into the T'nowhead pew, so well



watched that they dared not misbehave, and so tightly packed that they could not fall. The congregation looked at that pew, the mothers enviously, when they sang the lines—

“Jerusalem like a city is  
Compactly built together.”

The first half of the service had been gone through on this particular Sunday without anything remarkable happening. It was at the end of the psalm which preceded the sermon that Sanders Elshioner, who sat near the door, 10 lowered his head until it was no higher than the pews, and in that attitude, looking almost like a four-footed animal, slipped out of the church. In their eagerness to be at the sermon many of the congregation did not notice him, and those who did put the matter by in their minds for future 15 investigation. Sam'l, however, could not take it so coolly. From his seat in the gallery he saw Sanders disappear, and his mind misgave him. With the true lover's instinct he understood it all. Sanders had been struck by the fine turn-out in the T'nowhead pew. Bell was alone at the 20 farm. What an opportunity to work one's way up to a proposal! T'nowhead was so overrun with children that such a chance seldom occurred, except on a Sabbath. Sanders, doubtless, was off to propose, and he, Sam'l, was left behind. 25

The suspense was terrible. [Sam'l and Sanders had both known all along that Bell would take the first of the two who asked her. Even those who thought her proud admitted that she was modest. Bitterly the weaver repented having waited so long. Now it was too late. In ten 30 minutes Sanders would be at T'nowhead; in an hour all would be over. Sam'l rose to his feet in a daze. His mother pulled him down by the coat-tail, and his father shook him, thinking he was walking in his sleep. He

tottered past them, however, hurried up the aisle, which was so narrow that Dan'l Ross could only reach his seat by walking sideways, and was gone before the minister could do more than stop in the middle of a whirl and gape in horror after him.

A number of the congregation felt that day the advantage of sitting in the laft.<sup>1</sup> What was a mystery to those downstairs was revealed to them. From the gallery windows they had a fine open view to the south; and as Sam'l took the common, which was a short cut though a steep ascent, to T'nowhead, he was never out of their line of vision. Sanders was not to be seen, but they guessed rightly the reason why. Thinking he had ample time, he had gone round by the main road to save his boots—perhaps a little scared by what was coming. Sam'l's design was to forestall him by taking the shorter path over the burn<sup>2</sup> and up the commonty.<sup>3</sup>

It was a race for a wife, and several onlookers in the gallery braved the minister's displeasure to see who won. Those who favored Sam'l's suit exultingly saw him leap the stream, while the friends of Sanders fixed their eyes on the top of the common where it ran into the road. Sanders must come into sight there, and the one who reached this point first would get Bell.

As Auld Lights do not walk abroad on the Sabbath, Sanders would probably not be delayed. The chances were in his favor. Had it been any other day in the week Sam'l might have run. So some of the congregation in the gallery were thinking, when suddenly they saw him bend low and then take to his heels. He had caught sight of Sanders' head bobbing over the hedge that separated the road from the common, and feared that Sanders might see him. The congregation who could crane their necks

<sup>1</sup> Gallery.

<sup>2</sup> Brook.

<sup>3</sup> Common.

sufficiently saw a black object, which they guessed to be the carter's hat, crawling along the hedge-top. For a moment it was motionless, and then it shot ahead. The rivals had seen each other. It was now a hot race. Sam'l, dissembling no longer, clattered up the common, becoming smaller and smaller to the on-lookers as he neared the top. More than one person in the gallery almost rose to their feet in their excitement. Sam'l had it. No, Sanders was in front. Then the two figures disappeared from view. They seemed to run into each other at the top of the brae, and no one could say who was first. The congregation looked at one another. Some of them perspired. But the minister held on his course.

Sam'l had just been in time to cut Sanders out. It was the weaver's saving that Sanders saw this when his rival turned the corner; for Sam'l was sadly blown. Sanders took in the situation and gave in at once. The last hundred yards of the distance he covered at his leisure, and when he arrived at his destination he did not go in. It was a fine afternoon for the time of year, and he went round to have a look at the pig, about which T'nowhead was a little sinfully puffed up.

"Ay," said Sanders, digging his fingers critically into the grunting animal; "quite so."

"Grumph," said the pig, getting reluctantly to his feet.

"Ou, ay; yes," said Sanders, thoughtfully.

Then he sat down on the edge of the sty, and looked long and silently at an empty bucket. But whether his thoughts were of T'nowhead's Bell, whom he had lost forever, or of the food the farmer fed his pig on, is not known.

"Lord preserve's! Are ye no at the kirk?" cried Bell, nearly dropping the baby as Sam'l broke into the room.

"Bell!" cried Sam'l.

Then T'nowhead's Bell knew that her hour had come.

"Sam'l," she faltered.

"Will ye hae's, Bell?" demanded Sam'l, glaring at her  
5 sheepishly.

"Ay," answered Bell.

Sam'l fell into a chair.

"Bring's a drink o' water, Bell," he said. But Bell  
thought the occasion required milk, and there was none in  
10 the kitchen. She went out to the byre, still with the baby  
in her arms, and saw Sanders Elshioner sitting gloomily on  
the pig-sty.

"Weel, Bell," said Sanders.

"I thocht ye'd been at the kirk, Sanders," said Bell.

15 Then there was a silence between them.

"Has Sam'l speired ye, Bell?" asked Sanders stolidly.

"Ay," said Bell again, and this time there was a tear in  
her eye. Sanders was little better than an "orra man,"<sup>1</sup>  
and Sam'l was a weaver, and yet— But it was too late  
20 now. Sanders gave the pig a vicious poke with a stick,  
and when it had ceased to grunt, Bell was back in the  
kitchen. She had forgotten about the milk, however, and  
Sam'l only got water after all.

In after days, when the story of Bell's wooing was told,  
25 there were some who held that the circumstances would  
have almost justified the lassie in giving Sam'l the go-by.  
But these perhaps forgot that her other lover was in the  
same predicament as the accepted one—that of the two,  
indeed, he was the more to blame, for he set off to T'now-  
30 head on the Sabbath of his own accord, while Sam'l only  
ran after him. And then there is no one to say for certain  
whether Bell heard of her suitors' delinquencies until  
Lisbeth's return from the kirk. Sam'l could never remem-

<sup>1</sup> Odd job man.

ber whether he told her, and Bell was not sure whether, if he did, she took it in. Sanders was greatly in demand for weeks after to tell what he knew of the affair, but though he was twice asked to tea to the manse among the trees, and subjected thereafter to ministerial cross-examinations, 5 this is all he told. He remained at the pig-sty until Sam'l left the farm, when he joined him at the top of the brae, and they went home together.

"It's yersel, Sanders," said Sam'l.

"It is so, Sam'l," said Sanders. 10

"Very cauld," said Sam'l.

"Blawy," assented Sanders.

After a pause—

"Sam'l," said Sanders.

"Ay." 15

"I'm hearin' ye're to be mairit."

"Ay."

"Weel, Sam'l, she's a snod bit lassie."

"Thank ye," said Sam'l.

"I had ance a kin' o' notion o' Bell mysel," continued 20 Sanders.

"Ye had?"

"Yes, Sam'l; but I thocht better o't."

"Hoo d'ye mean?" asked Sam'l, a little anxiously.

"Weel, Sam'l, mairitch is a terrible responsibeelity." 25

"It is so," said Sam'l, wincing.

"An' no the thing to tak up withoot conseederation."

"But it's a blessed and honorable state, Sanders; ye've heard the minister on't." 30

"They say," continued the relentless Sanders, "'at the minister doesna get on sair <sup>1</sup> wi' the wife himsel."

"So they do," cried Sam'l, with a sinking at the heart.

<sup>1</sup> Very well.

"I've been telt," Sanders went on, "'at gin ye can get the upper han' o' the wife for a while at first, there's the mair chance o' a harmonious exeistence."

"Bell's no the lassie," said Sam'l appealingly, "to  
5 thwart her man."

Sanders smiled.

"D'ye think she is, Sanders?"

"Weel, Sam'l, I d'na want to fluster ye, but she's been  
ower lang wi' Lisbeth Fargus no to hae learnt her ways,  
10 An a'body kins what a life T'nowhead has wi' her."

"Guid sake, Sanders, hoo did ye no speak o' this afore?"

"I thocht ye kent <sup>1</sup> o't, Sam'l."

They had now reached the square, and the U. P. kirk  
15 was coming out. The Auld Licht kirk would be half an hour yet.

"But, Sanders," said Sam'l, brightening up, "ye was on yer wy to spier her yersel."

"I was, Sam'l," said Sanders, "and I canna but be  
20 thankfu' ye was ower quick for's."

"Gin't hadna been you," said Sam'l, "I wid never hae thocht o't."

"I'm sayin' naething agin Bell," pursued the other, "but, man Sam'l, a body should be mair deleeberate in a  
25 thing o' the kind."

"It was mighty hurried," said Sam'l, wofully.

"It's a serious thing to spier a lassie," said Sanders.

"It's an awfu' thing," said Sam'l.

"But we'll hope for the best," added Sanders in a hope-  
30 less voice.

They were close to the Tenements now, and Sam'l looked as if he were on his way to be hanged.

"Sam'l!"

<sup>1</sup> Knew.

"Ay, Sanders."

"Did ye—did ye kiss her, Sam'l?"

"Na."

"Hoo?"

"There's was varra little time, Sanders."

5

"Half an 'oor," said Sanders.

"Was there? Man Sanders, to tell ye the truth, I never thocht o't."

Then the soul of Sanders Elshioner was filled with contempt for Sam'l Dickie.

10

The scandal blew over. At first it was expected that the minister would interfere to prevent the union, but beyond intimating from the pulpit that the souls of Sabbath-breakers were beyond praying for, and then praying for Sam'l and Sanders at great length, with a word thrown in for Bell, he let things take their course. Some said it was because he was always frightened lest his young men should intermarry with other denominations, but Sanders explained it differently to Sam'l.

15

"I hav'na a word to say agin the minister," he said; "they're gran' prayers, but, Sam'l, he's a mairit man himsel."

20

"He's a' the better for that, Sanders, isna he?"

"Do ye no see," asked Sanders compassionately, "'at he's tryin' to mak the best o't?"

25

"Oh, Sanders, man!" said Sam'l.

"Cheer up, Sam'l," said Sanders, "it'll sune be ower."

Their having been rival suitors had not interfered with their friendship. On the contrary, while they had hitherto been mere acquaintances, they became inseparables as the wedding-day drew near. It was noticed that they had much to say to each other, and that when they could not get a room to themselves they wandered about together in the churchyard. When Sam'l had anything to tell Bell

30

he sent Sanders to tell it, and Sanders did as he was bid. There was nothing that he would not have done for Sam'l.

The more obliging Sanders was, however, the sadder Sam'l grew. He never laughed now on Saturdays, and sometimes his loom was silent half the day. Sam'l felt that Sanders' was the kindness of a friend for a dying man.

It was to be a penny wedding, and Lisbeth Fergus said it was delicacy that made Sam'l superintend the fitting-up of the barn by deputy. Once he came to see it in person, but he looked so ill that Sanders had to see him home. This was on the Thursday afternoon, and the wedding was fixed for Friday.

"Sanders, Sanders," said Sam'l, in a voice strangely unlike his own, "it'll a' be ower by this time the morn."

15 "It will," said Sanders.

"If I had only kent her langer," continued Sam'l.

"It wid hae been safer," said Sanders.

"Did ye see the yallow floor in Bell's bonnet?" asked the accepted swain.

20 "Ay," said Sanders reluctantly.

"I'm dootin'—I'm sair dootin' she's but a flichty,<sup>1</sup> light-hearted crittur after a'."

"I had ay my suspecions o't," said Sanders.

"Ye hae kent her langer than me," said Sam'l.

25 "Yes," said Sanders, "but there's nae gettin' at the heart o' women. Man, Sam'l, they're desperate cunnin'."

"I'm dootin't; I'm sair dootin't."

"It'll be a warnin' to ye, Sam'l, no to be in sic a hurry i' the futur," said Sanders.

30 Sam'l groaned.

"Ye'll be gaein up to the manse to arrange wi' the minister the morn's mornin'," continued Sanders, in a subdued voice.

<sup>1</sup> Flighty.



Sam'l looked wistfully at his friend.

"I canna do't, Sanders," he said, "I canna do't."

"Ye maun," said Sanders.

"It's aisy to speak," retorted Sam'l bitterly.

"We have a' oor troubles, Sam'l," said Sanders soothingly, "an' every man maun bear his ain burdens. Johnny Davie's wife's dead, an' he's no repinin'." 5

"Ay," said Sam'l, "but a death's no a mairitch. We hae haen deaths in our family too."

"It may a' be for the best," added Sanders, "an' there 10  
wid be a mighty talk i' the hale <sup>1</sup> country-side gin ye didna  
ging to the minister like a man."

"I maun hae langer to think o't," said Sam'l.

"Bell's mairitch is the morn," said Sanders decisively. 15

Sam'l glanced up with a wild look in his eyes.

"Sanders!" he cried.

"Sam'l!"

"Ye hae been a guid friend to me, Sanders, in this sair affliction." 20

"Nothing ava," <sup>2</sup> said Sanders; "dount mention'd."

"But, Sanders, ye canna deny but what your rinnin oot o' the kirk that awfu' day was at the bottom o'd a'."

"It was so," said Sanders bravely.

"An' ye used to be fond o' Bell, Sanders." 25

"I dinna deny't."

"Sanders, laddie," said Sam'l, bending forward and speaking in a wheedling voice, "I aye thocht it was you she likit."

"I had some sic idea mysel," said Sanders. 30

"Sanders, I canna think to pairt twa fowk sae weel suited to ane anither as you an' Bell."

"Canna ye, Sam'l?"

<sup>1</sup> Whole.

<sup>2</sup> At all.

“She wid make ye a guid wife, Sanders. I hae studied her weel, and she’s a thrifty, douce,<sup>1</sup> clever lassie. Sanders, there’s no the like o’ her. Mony a time, Sanders, I hae said to mysel, ‘There’s a lass ony man micht be prood to tak.’ A’body says the same, Sanders. There’s nae risk  
5 ava, man: nane to speak o’. Tak her, laddie, tak her, Sanders; it’s a grand chance, Sanders. She’s yours for the spierin.’ I’ll gie her up, Sanders.”

“Will ye, though?” said Sanders.

10 “What d’ye think?” asked Sam’l.

“If ye wid rayther,” said Sanders politely.

“There’s my han’ on’t,” said Sam’l. “Bless ye, Sanders; ye’ve been a true frien’ to me.”

Then they shook hands for the first time in their lives;  
15 and soon afterward Sanders struck up the brae to T’now-head.

Next morning Sanders Elshioner, who had been very busy the night before, put on his Sabbath clothes and strolled up to the manse.

20 “But—but where is Sam’l?” asked the minister; “I must see himself.”

“It’s a new arrangement,” said Sanders.

“What do you mean, Sanders?”

“Bell’s to marry me,” explained Sanders.

25 “But—but what does Sam’l say?”

“He’s willin’,” said Sanders.

“And Bell?”

“She’s willin’, too. She prefers’t.”

“It is unusual,” said the minister.

30 “It’s a’ richt,” said Sanders.

“Well, you know best,” said the minister.

“You see the hoose was taen, at ony rate,” continued Sanders. “An’ I’ll juist ging in til’t<sup>2</sup> instead o’ Sam’l.”

<sup>1</sup> Sober, steady.

<sup>2</sup> To it.

"Quite so."

"An' I cudna think to disappoint the lassie."

"Your sentiments do you credit, Sanders," said the minister; "but I hope you do not enter upon the blessed state of matrimony without full consideration of its responsibilities. It is a serious business, marriage." 5

"It's a' that," said Sanders, "but I'm willin' to stan' the risk."

So, as soon as it could be done, Sanders Elshioner took to wife T'nowhead's Bell, and I remember seeing Sam'l 10 Dickie trying to dance at the penny wedding.

Years afterward it was said in Thrums that Sam'l had treated Bell badly, but he was never sure about it himself.

"It was a near thing—a mighty near thing," he admitted in the square. 15

"They say," some other weaver would remark, "'at it was you Bell liked best."

"I d'na kin," Sam'l would reply, "but there's nae doot the lassie was fell <sup>1</sup> fond o' me. Ou, a mere passin' fancy's ye nicht say." 20

<sup>1</sup> "Mighty."

## PHŒBE<sup>1</sup>

By O. HENRY

"You are a man of many novel adventures and varied enterprises," I said to Captain Patricio Maloné. "Do you believe that the possible element of good luck or bad luck—if there is such a thing as luck—has influenced  
5 your career or persisted for or against you to such an extent that you were forced to attribute results to the operation of the aforesaid good luck or bad luck?"

This question (of almost the dull insolence of legal phraseology) was put while we sat in Rousselin's little  
10 red-tiled café near Congo Square in New Orleans.

Brown-faced, white-hatted, finger-ringed captains of adventure came often to Rousselin's for the cognac. They came from sea and land, and were chary of relating the things they had seen—not because they were more  
15 wonderful than the fantasies of the Ananias of print, but because they were so different. And I was a perpetual wedding-guest, always striving to cast my button-hole over the finger of one of these mariners of fortune. This Captain Maloné was a Hiberno-Iberian creole who  
20 had gone to and fro in the earth and walked up and down in it. He looked like any other well-dressed man of thirty-five whom you might meet, except that he was hopelessly weather-tanned, and wore on his chain an ancient ivory-and-gold Peruvian charm against evil,  
25 which has nothing at all to do with this story.

"My answer to your question," said the captain, smil-

<sup>1</sup> From "Roads of Destiny;" copyright, 1909, by Doubleday, Page & Co. Reprinted by permission. Copyright, 1903, by the Cosmopolitan Magazine Company.

ing, "will be to tell you the story of Bad-Luck Kearny. That is, if you don't mind hearing it."

My reply was to pound on the table for Rousselin.

"Strolling along Tchoupitoulas Street one night," began Captain Maloné, "I noticed, without especially 5 taxing my interest, a small man walking rapidly toward me. He stepped upon a wooden cellar door, crashed through it, and disappeared. I rescued him from a heap of soft coal below. He dusted himself briskly, swearing fluently in a mechanical tone, as an underpaid actor recites the 10 gipsy's curse. Gratitude and the dust in his throat seemed to call for fluids to clear them away. His desire for liquidation was expressed so heartily that I went with him to a café down the street where we had some vile vermouth and bitters. 15

"Looking across that little table I had my first clear sight of Francis Kearny. He was about five feet seven, but as tough as a cypress knee. His hair was darkest red, his mouth such a mere slit that you wondered how the flood of his words came rushing from it. His eyes were 20 the brightest and lightest blue and the hopefulest that I ever saw. He gave the double impression that he was at bay and that you had better not crowd him further.

"Just in from a gold-hunting expedition on the coast of Costa Rica," he explained. "Second mate of a banana 25 steamer told me the natives were panning out enough from the beach sands to buy all the rum, red calico, and parlor melodeons in the world. The day I got there a syndicate named Incorporated Jones gets a government concession to all minerals from a given point. For a next choice I 30 take coast fever and count green and blue lizards for six weeks in a grass hut. I had to be notified when I was well, for the reptiles were actually there. Then I shipped back

as third cook on a Norwegian tramp that blew up her boiler two miles below Quarantine. I was due to bust through that cellar door here to-night, so I hurried the rest of the way up the river, roustabouting on a lower coast packet  
5 that made a landing for every fisherman that wanted a plug of tobacco. And now I'm here for what comes next. And it'll be along, it'll be along,' said this queer Mr. Kearny; 'it'll be along on the beams of my bright but not very particular star.'

10 "From the first the personality of Kearny charmed me. I saw in him the bold heart, the restless nature, and the valiant front against the buffets of fate that make his countrymen such valuable comrades in risk and adventure. And just then I was wanting such men. Moored at a  
15 fruit company's pier I had a 500-ton steamer ready to sail the next day with a cargo of sugar, lumber, and corrugated iron for a port in—well, let us call the country Esperando—it has not been long ago, and the name of Patricio Maloné is still spoken there when its unsettled politics are discussed.  
20 Beneath the sugar and iron were packed a thousand Winchester rifles. In Aguas Frias, the capital, Don Rafael Valdevia, Minister of War, Esperando's greatest-hearted and most able patriot, awaited my coming. No doubt you have heard, with a smile, of the insignificant  
25 wars and uprisings in those little tropic republics. They make but a faint clamor against the din of great nations' battles; but down there, under all the ridiculous uniforms and petty diplomacy and senseless countermarching and intrigue, are to be found statesmen and patriots. Don  
30 Rafael Valdevia was one. His great ambition was to raise Esperando into peace and honest prosperity and the respect of the serious nations. So he waited for my rifles in Aguas Frias. But one would think I am trying to win a recruit in you! No; it was Francis Kearny I wanted.

And so I told him, speaking long over our execrable vermouth, breathing the stifling odor from garlic and tarpaulins, which, as you know, is the distinctive flavor of cafés in the lower slant of our city. I spoke of the tyrant President Cruz and the burdens that his greed and insolent cruelty laid upon the people. And at that Kearny's tears flowed. And then I dried them with a picture of the fat rewards that would be ours when the oppressor should be overthrown and the wise and generous Valdevia in his seat. Then Kearny leaped to his feet and wrung my hand with the strength of a roustabout. He was mine, he said, till the last minion of the hated despot was hurled from the highest peaks of the Cordilleras into the sea. 5 10

"I paid the score and we went out. Near the door Kearny's elbow overturned an upright glass showcase, smashing it into little bits. I paid the storekeeper the price he asked. 15

"Come to my hotel for the night,' I said to Kearny. 'We sail to-morrow at noon.'

"He agreed; but on the sidewalk he fell to cursing again in the dull, monotonous, glib way that he had done when I pulled him out of the coal cellar. 20

"Captain,' said he, 'before we go any further, it's no more than fair to tell you that I'm known from Baffin's Bay to Terra del Fuego as "Bad-Luck" Kearny. And I'm It. Everything I get into goes up in the air except a balloon. Every bet I ever made I lost except when I copped it. Every boat I ever sailed on sank except the submarines. Everything I was ever interested in went to pieces except a patent bombshell that I invented. Everything I ever took hold of and tried to run I ran into the ground except when I tried to plough. And that's why they call me Bad-Luck Kearny. I thought I'd tell you.' 25 30

"Bad luck,' said I, 'or what goes by the name, may

now and then tangle the affairs of any man. But if it persist beyond the estimate of what we may call the "averages" there must be a cause for it.'

"'There is,' said Kearny emphatically, 'and when we  
5 walk another square I will show it to you.'

"Surprised, I kept by his side until we came to Canal Street and out into the middle of its great width.

"Kearny seized me by an arm and pointed a tragic forefinger at a rather brilliant star that shone steadily  
10 about thirty degrees above the horizon.

"'That's Saturn,' said he, 'the star that presides over bad luck and evil and disappointment and nothing doing and trouble. I was born under that star. Every move I make, up bobs Saturn and blocks it. He's the hoodoo  
15 planet of the heavens. They say he's 73,000 miles in diameter and no solidier of body than split-pea soup, and he's got as many disreputable and malignant rings as Chicago. Now, what kind of a star is that to be born under?'

"I asked Kearny where he had obtained all this astonishing knowledge.  
20

"'From Azrath, the great astrologer of Cleveland, Ohio,' said he. 'That man looked at a glass ball and told me my name before I'd taken a chair. He prophesied the date of my birth and death before I'd said a word. And  
25 then he cast my horoscope, and the sidereal system socked me in the solar plexus. It was bad luck for Francis Kearny from A to Izard and for his friends that were implicated with him. For that I gave up ten dollars. This Azrath was sorry, but he respected his profession too much to read  
30 the heavens wrong for any man. It was night time, and he took me out on a balcony and gave me a free view of the sky. And he showed me which Saturn was, and how to find it in different balconies and longitudes.

"'But Saturn wasn't all. He was only the man higher



up. He furnishes so much bad luck that they allow him a gang of deputy sparklers to help hand it out. They're circulating and revolving and hanging around the main supply all the time, each one throwing the hoodoo on his own particular district.

“‘You see that ugly little red star about eight inches above and to the right of Saturn?’ Kearny asked me. ‘Well, that’s her. That’s Phoebe. She’s got me in charge. “By the day of your birth,” says Azrath to me, “your life is subjected to the influence of Saturn. By the hour and minute of it you must dwell under the sway and direct authority of Phoebe, the ninth satellite.” So said this Azrath.’ Kearny shook his fist viciously skyward. ‘Curse her, she’s done her work well,’ said he. ‘Ever since I was astrologized, bad luck has followed me like my shadow, as I told you. And for many years before. Now, Captain, I’ve told you my handicap as a man should. If you’re afraid this evil star of mine might cripple your scheme, leave me out of it.’

“I reassured Kearny as well as I could. I told him that for the time we would banish both astrology and astronomy from our heads. The manifest valor and enthusiasm of the man drew me. ‘Let us see what a little courage and diligence will do against bad luck,’ I said. ‘We will sail to-morrow for Esperando.’

“Fifty miles down the Mississippi our steamer broke her rudder. We sent for a tug to tow us back and lost three days. When we struck the blue waters of the Gulf, all the storm clouds of the Atlantic seemed to have concentrated above us. We thought surely to sweeten those leaping waves with our sugar, and to stack our arms and lumber on the floor of the Mexican Gulf.

“Kearny did not seek to cast off one iota of the burden of our danger from the shoulders of his fatal horoscope.

He weathered every storm on deck, smoking a black pipe, to keep which alight rain and sea-water seemed but as oil. And he shook his fist at the black clouds behind which his baleful star winked its unseen eye. When the  
5 skies cleared one evening, he reviled his malignant guardian with grim humor.

“On watch, aren’t you, you red-headed vixen? Out making it hot for little Francis Kearny and his friends, according to Hoyle. Twinkle, twinkle, little devil! You’re  
10 a lady, aren’t you?—dogging a man with bad luck just because he happened to be born while your boss was floor-walker. Get busy and sink the ship, you one-eyed banshee. Phoebe! H’m! Sounds as mild as a milkmaid. You can’t judge a woman by her name. Why couldn’t I have had a  
15 man star? I can’t make the remarks to Phoebe that I could to a man. Oh, Phoebe, you be—blasted!”

“For eight days gales and squalls and waterspouts beat us from our course. Five days only should have landed us in Esperando. Our Jonah swallowed the bad credit  
20 of it with appealing frankness; but that scarcely lessened the hardships our cause was made to suffer.

“At last one afternoon we steamed into the calm estuary of the little Rio Escondido. Three miles up this we crept, feeling for the shallow channel between the low  
25 banks that were crowded to the edge with gigantic trees and riotous vegetation. Then our whistle gave a little toot, and in five minutes we heard a shout, and Carlos—my brave Carlos Quintana—crashed through the tangled vines waving his cap madly for joy.

30 “A hundred yards away was his camp, where three hundred chosen patriots of Esperando were awaiting our coming. For a month Carlos had been drilling them there in the tactics of war, and filling them with the spirit of revolution and liberty.

“My Captain—*compadre mio!*” shouted Carlos, while yet my boat was being lowered. ‘You should see them in the drill by *companias*—in the column wheel—in the march by fours—they are superb! Also in the manual of arms—but, alas! performed only with sticks of bamboo. The guns, *capitan*—say that you have brought the guns!’ 5

“A thousand Winchesters, Carlos,’ I called to him. ‘And two Gatlings.’

“*Valgame Dios!*” he cried, throwing his cap in the air. ‘We shall sweep the world!’ 10

“At that moment Kearny tumbled from the steamer’s side into the river. He could not swim, so the crew threw him a rope and drew him back aboard. I caught his eye and his look of pathetic but still bright and undaunted consciousness of his guilty luck. I told myself that although 15 he might be a man to shun, he was also one to be admired.

“I gave orders to the sailing-master that the arms, ammunition, and provisions were to be landed at once. That was easy in the steamer’s boats, except for the two Gatling guns. For their transportation ashore we carried 20 a stout flatboat, brought for the purpose in the steamer’s hold.

“In the meantime I walked with Carlos to the camp and made the soldiers a little speech in Spanish, which they received with enthusiasm; and then I had some wine 25 and a cigarette in Carlos’s tent. Later we walked back to the river to see how the unloading was being conducted.

“The small arms and provisions were already ashore, and the petty officers had squads of men conveying them to camp. One Gatling had been safely landed; the other 30 was just being hoisted over the side of the vessel as we arrived. I noticed Kearny darting about on board, seeming to have the ambition of ten men, and to be doing the work of five. I think his zeal bubbled over when he

saw Carlos and me. A rope's end was swinging loose from some part of the tackle. Kearny leaped impetuously and caught it. There was a crackle and a hiss and a smoke of scorching hemp, and the Gatling dropped straight as a plummet through the bottom of the flatboat and buried itself in twenty feet of water and five feet of river mud.

"I turned my back on the scene. I heard Carlos's loud cries as if from some extreme grief too poignant for words. I heard the complaining murmur of the crew and the maledictions of Torres, the sailing-master—I could not bear to look.

"By night some degree of order had been restored in camp. Military rules were not drawn strictly, and the men were grouped about the fires of their several messes, playing games of chance, singing their native songs, or discussing with voluble animation the contingencies of our march upon the capital.

"To my tent, which had been pitched for me close to that of my chief lieutenant, came Kearny, indomitable, smiling, bright-eyed, bearing no traces of the buffets of his evil star. Rather was his aspect that of a heroic martyr whose tribulations were so high-sourced and glorious that he even took a splendor and a prestige from them.

"'Well, Captain,' said he, 'I guess you realize that Bad-Luck Kearny is still on deck. It was a shame, now, about that gun. She only needed to be slewed two inches to clear the rail; and that's why I grabbed that rope's end. Who'd have thought that a sailor—even a Sicilian lubber on a banana coaster—would have fastened a line in a bow-knot? Don't think I'm trying to dodge the responsibility, Captain. It's my luck.'

"'There are men, Kearny,' said I gravely, 'who pass through life blaming upon luck and chance the mistakes that result from their own faults and incompetency. I

do not say that you are such a man. But if all your mis-haps are traceable to that tiny star, the sooner we endow our colleges with chairs of moral astronomy, the better.'

"'It isn't the size of the star that counts,' said Kearny; 5  
'it's the quality. Just the way it is with women. That's why they gave the biggest planets masculine names, and the little stars feminine ones—to even things up when it comes to getting their work in. Suppose they had called my star Agamemnon or Bill McCarty or something like 10  
that instead of Phoebe. Every time one of those old boys touched their calamity button and sent me down one of their wireless pieces of bad luck, I could talk back and tell 'em what I thought of 'em in suitable terms. But you can't address such remarks to a Phoebe.' 15

"'It pleases you to make a joke of it, Kearny,' said I, without smiling. 'But it is no joke to me to think of my Gatling mired in the river ooze.'

"'As to that,' said Kearny, abandoning his light mood at once, 'I have already done what I could. I have had 20  
some experience in hoisting stone in quarries. Torres and I have already spliced three hawsers and stretched them from the steamer's stern to a tree on shore. We will rig a tackle and have the gun on terra firma before noon tomorrow.' 25

"One could not remain long at outs with Bad-Luck Kearny.

"'Once more,' said I to him, 'we will waive this question of luck. Have you ever had experience in drilling raw troops?' 30

"'I was first sergeant and drill-master,' said Kearny, 'in the Chilean army for one year. And captain of artillery for another.'

"'What became of your command?' I asked.

“‘Shot down to a man,’ said Kearny, ‘during the revolutions against Balmaceda.’

“Somehow the misfortunes of the evil-starred one seemed to turn to me their comedy side. I lay back upon my goat’s hide cot and laughed until the woods echoed. Kearny grinned. ‘I told you how it was,’ he said.

“‘To-morrow,’ I said, ‘I shall detail one hundred men under your command for manual-of-arms drill and company evolutions. You will rank as lieutenant. Now, for God’s sake, Kearny,’ I urged him, “try to combat this superstition, if it is one. Bad luck may be like any other visitor—preferring to stop where it is expected. Get your mind off stars. Look upon Esperando as your planet of good fortune.’

“‘I thank you, Captain,’ said Kearny quietly. ‘I will try to make it the best handicap I ever ran.’

“By noon the next day the submerged Gatling was rescued, as Kearny had promised. Then Carlos and Manuel Ortiz and Kearny (my lieutenants) distributed Winchesters among the troops and put them through an incessant rifle drill. We fired no shots, blank or solid, for of all coasts Esperando is the stillest; and we had no desire to sound any warnings in the ear of that corrupt government until they should carry with them the message of Liberty and the downfall of Oppression.

“In the afternoon came a mule-rider bearing a written message to me from Don Rafael Valdevia in the capital, Aguas Frias.

“Whenever that man’s name comes to my lips, words of tribute to his greatness, his noble simplicity, and his conspicuous genius follow irrepressibly. He was a traveler, a student of peoples and governments, a master of sciences, a poet, an orator, a leader, a soldier, a critic of the world’s campaigns and the idol of the people of Esperando. I

had been honored by his friendship for years. It was I who first turned his mind to the thought that he should leave for his monument a new Esperando—a country freed from the rule of unscrupulous tyrants, and a people made happy and prosperous by wise and impartial legislation. When he had consented he threw himself into the cause with the undivided zeal with which he endowed all of his acts. The coffers of his great fortune were opened to those of us to whom were entrusted the secret moves of the game. His popularity was already so great that he had practically forced President Cruz to offer him the portfolio of Minister of War.

“The time, Don Rafael said in his letter, was ripe. Success, he prophesied, was certain. The people were beginning to clamor publicly against Cruz’s misrule. Bands of citizens in the capital were even going about of nights hurling stones at public buildings and expressing their dissatisfaction. A bronze statue of President Cruz in the Botanical Gardens had been lassoed about the neck and overthrown. It only remained for me to arrive with my force and my thousand rifles, and for himself to come forward and proclaim himself the people’s savior, to overthrow Cruz in a single day. There would be but a half-hearted resistance from the six hundred government troops stationed in the capital. The country was ours. He presumed that by this time my steamer had arrived at Quintana’s camp. He proposed the eighteenth of July for the attack. That would give us six days in which to strike camp and march to Aguas Frias. In the meantime Don Rafael remained my good friend and *compadre en la causa de la libertad*.

“On the morning of the 14th we began our march toward the sea-following range of mountains, over the sixty-mile trail to the capital. Our small arms and pro-

visions were laden on pack mules. Twenty men harnessed to each Gatling gun rolled them smoothly along the flat, alluvial lowlands. Our troops, well-shod and well-fed, moved with alacrity and heartiness. I and my three  
5 lieutenants were mounted on the tough mountain ponies of the country.

“A mile out of camp one of the pack mules, becoming stubborn, broke away from the train and plunged from the path into the thicket. The alert Kearny spurred  
10 quickly after it and intercepted its flight. Rising in his stirrups, he released one foot and bestowed upon the mutinous animal a hearty kick. The mule tottered and fell with a crash broadside upon the ground. As we gathered around it, it walled its great eyes almost humanly  
15 toward Kearny and expired. That was bad; but worse, to our minds, was the concomitant disaster. Part of the mule’s burden had been one hundred pounds of the finest coffee to be had in the tropics. The bag burst and spilled the priceless brown mass of the ground berries among the  
20 dense vines and weeds of the swampy land. *Mala suerte!* When you take away from an Esperandan his coffee, you abstract his patriotism and 50 per cent. of his value as a soldier. The men began to rake up the precious stuff; but I beckoned Kearny back along the trail where they would  
25 not hear. The limit had been reached.

“I took from my pocket a wallet of money and drew out some bills.

“‘Mr. Kearny,’ said I, ‘here are some funds belonging to Don Rafael Valdevia, which I am expending in his  
30 cause. I know of no better service it can buy for him than this. Here is one hundred dollars. Luck or no luck, we part company here. Star or no star, calamity seems to travel by your side. You will return to the steamer. She touches at Amotapa to discharge her lumber and iron,



and then puts back to New Orleans. Hand this note to the sailing-master, who will give you passage.' I wrote on a leaf torn from my book, and placed it and the money in Kearny's hand.

"'Good-bye,' I said, extending my own. 'It is not 5 that I am displeased with you; but there is no place in this expedition for—let us say, the Señorita Phœbe.' I said this with a smile, trying to smooth the thing for him. 'May you have better luck, *compañero*.'

"Kearny took the money and the paper. 10

"'It was just a little touch,' said he, 'just a little lift with the toe of my boot—but what's the odds?—that blamed mule would have died if I had only dusted his ribs with a powder puff. It was my luck. Well, Captain, I would have liked to be in that little fight with you over 15 in Aguas Frias. Success to the cause. *Adios!*'

"He turned around and set off down the trail without looking back. The unfortunate mule's pack-saddle was transferred to Kearny's pony, and we again took up the march. 20

"Four days we journeyed over the foot-hills and mountains, fording icy torrents, winding around the crumbling brows of ragged peaks, creeping along rocky flanges that overlooked awful precipices, crawling breathlessly over tottering bridges that crossed bottomless chasms. 25

"On the evening of the seventeenth we camped by a little stream on the bare hills five miles from Aguas Frias. At daybreak we were to take up the march again.

"At midnight I was standing outside my tent inhaling the fresh cold air. The stars were shining bright in the 30 cloudless sky, giving the heavens their proper aspect of illimitable depth and distance when viewed from the vague darkness of the blotted earth. Almost at its zenith was the planet Saturn; and with a half-smile I observed

the sinister red sparkle of his malignant attendant—the demon star of Kearny's ill luck. And then my thoughts strayed across the hills to the scene of our coming triumph where the heroic and noble Don Rafael awaited our coming  
5 to set a new and shining star in the firmament of nations.

"I heard a slight rustling in the deep grass to my right. I turned and saw Kearny coming toward me. He was ragged and dew-drenched and limping. His hat and one boot were gone. About one foot he had tied some make-  
10 shift of cloth and grass. But his manner as he approached was that of a man who knows his own virtues well enough to be superior to rebuffs.

"'Well, sir,' I said, staring at him coldly, 'if there is anything in persistence, I see no reason why you should  
15 not succeed in wrecking and ruining us yet.'

"'I kept half a day's journey behind,' said Kearny, fishing out a stone from the covering of his lame foot 'so the bad luck wouldn't touch you. I couldn't help it, Captain; I wanted to be in on this game. It was a  
20 pretty tough trip, especially in the department of the commissary. In the low grounds there were always bananas and oranges. Higher up it was worse; but your men left a good deal of goat meat hanging on the bushes in the camps. Here's your hundred dollars. You're  
25 nearly there now, captain. Let me in on the scrapping to-morrow.'

"'Not for a hundred times a hundred would I have the tiniest thing go wrong with my plans now,' I said, 'whether caused by evil planets or the blunders of mere  
30 man. But yonder is Aguas Frias, five miles away, and a clear road. I am of the mind to defy Saturn and all his satellites to spoil our success now. At any rate, I will not turn away to-night as weary a traveler and as good a soldier as you are, Lieutenant Kearny. Manuel Ortiz's

tent is there by the brightest fire. Rout him out and tell him to supply you with food and blankets and clothes. We march again at daybreak.'

"Kearny thanked me briefly but feelingly and moved away.

"He had gone scarcely a dozen steps when a sudden flash of bright light illumined the surrounding hills; a sinister, growing, hissing sound like escaping steam filled my ears. Then followed a roar as of distant thunder, which grew louder every instant. This terrifying noise culminated in a tremendous explosion, which seemed to rock the hills as an earthquake would; the illumination waxed to a glare so fierce that I clapped my hands to my eyes to save them. I thought the end of the world had come. I could think of no natural phenomenon that would explain it. My wits were staggering. The deafening explosion trailed off into the rumbling roar that had preceded it; and through this I heard the frightened shouts of my troops as they stumbled from their resting-places and rushed wildly about. Also I heard the harsh tones of Kearny's voice crying: 'They'll blame it on me, of course, and what the devil it is, it's not Francis Kearny that can give you an answer.'

"I opened my eyes. The hills were still there, dark and solid. It had not been, then, a volcano or an earthquake. I looked up at the sky and saw a comet-like trail crossing the zenith and extending westward—a fiery trail waning fainter and narrower each moment.

"‘A meteor!’ I called aloud. ‘A meteor has fallen. There is no danger.’

"And then all other sounds were drowned by a great shout from Kearny's throat. He had raised both hands above his head and was standing tiptoe.

"‘PHŒBE'S GONE!’ he cried, with all his lungs.

'She's busted and gone to hell. Look, Captain, the little red-headed hoodoo has blown herself to smithereens. She found Kearny too tough to handle, and she puffed up with spite and meanness till her boiler blew up. It'll  
5 be Bad-Luck Kearny no more. Oh, let us be joyful!

"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall;  
Humpty busted, and that'll be all!"

"I looked up, wondering, and picked out Saturn in his place. But the small red twinkling luminary in his  
10 vicinity, which Kearny had pointed out to me as his evil star, had vanished. I had seen it there but half an hour before; there was no doubt that one of those awful and mysterious spasms of nature had hurled it from the heavens.

15 "I clapped Kearny on the shoulder.

"'Little man,' said I, 'let this clear the way for you. It appears that astrology has failed to subdue you. Your horoscope must be cast anew with pluck and loyalty for controlling stars. I play you to win. Now, get to your  
20 tent, and sleep. Daybreak is the word.'

"At nine o'clock on the morning of the eighteenth of July I rode into Aguas Frias with Kearny at my side. In his clean linen suit and with his military poise and keen eye he was a model of a fighting adventurer. I  
25 had visions of him riding as commander of President Valdevia's body-guard when the plums of the new republic should begin to fall.

"Carlos followed with the troops and supplies. He was to halt in a wood outside the town and remain concealed there until he received the word to advance.  
30

"Kearny and I rode down the Calle Ancha toward the *residencia* of Don Rafael at the other side of the town. As we passed the superb white buildings of the University

of Esperando, I saw at an open window the gleaming spectacles and bald head of Herr Bergowitz, professor of the natural sciences and friend of Don Rafael and of me and of the cause. He waved his hand to me, with his broad bland smile.

5

"There was no excitement apparent in Aguas Frias. The people went about leisurely as at all times; the market was thronged with bareheaded women buying fruit and *carne*; we heard the twang and tinkle of string bands in the patios of the *cantinas*. We could see that it was a 10 waiting game that Don Rafael was playing.

"His *residencia* was a large but low building around a great courtyard in grounds crowded with ornamental trees and tropic shrubs. At his door an old woman who came informed us that Don Rafael had not yet arisen. 15

"'Tell him,' said I, 'that Captain Maloné and a friend wish to see him at once. Perhaps he has overslept.'

"She came back looking frightened.

"'I have called,' she said, 'and rung his bell many times, but he does not answer.' 20

"I knew where his sleeping-room was. Kearny and I pushed by her and went to it. I put my shoulder against the thin door and forced it open.

"In an armchair by a great table covered with maps and books sat Don Rafael with his eyes closed. I touched 25 his hand. He had been dead many hours. On his head above one ear was a wound caused by a heavy blow. It had ceased to bleed long before.

"I made the old woman call a *mozo*, and dispatched him in haste to fetch Herr Bergowitz. 30

"He came, and we stood about as if we were half stunned by the awful shock. Thus can the letting of a few drops of blood from one man's veins drain the life of a nation.

"Presently Herr Bergowitz stooped and picked up a

darkish stone the size of an orange which he saw under the table. He examined it closely through his great glasses with the eye of science.

“‘A fragment,’ said he, ‘of a detonating meteor. The  
5 most remarkable one in twenty years exploded above this city a little after midnight this morning.’

“The professor looked quickly up at the ceiling. We saw the blue sky through a hole the size of an orange nearly above Don Rafael’s chair.

10 “I heard a familiar sound, and turned. Kearny had thrown himself on the floor and was babbling his compendium of bitter, blood-freezing curses against the star of his evil luck.

“Undoubtedly Phoebe had been feminine. Even when  
15 hurtling on her way to fiery dissolution and everlasting doom, the last word had been hers.”

Captain Maloné was not unskilled in narrative. He knew the point where a story should end. I sat reveling in his effective conclusion when he aroused me by continuing:  
20

“Of course,” said he, “our schemes were at an end. There was no one to take Don Rafael’s place. Our little army melted away like dew before the sun.

“One day after I had returned to New Orleans I re-  
25 lated this story to a friend who holds a professorship in Tulane University.

“When I had finished he laughed and asked whether I had any knowledge of Kearny’s luck afterward. I told him no, that I had seen him no more; but that when he  
30 left me, he had expressed confidence that his future would be successful now that his unlucky star had been overthrown.

“‘No doubt,’ said the professor, ‘he is happier not to

know one fact. If he derived his bad luck from Phœbe, the ninth satellite of Saturn, that malicious lady is still engaged in overlooking his career. The star close to Saturn that he imagined to be her was near that planet simply by the chance of its orbit—probably at different 5 times he has regarded many other stars that happened to be in Saturn's neighborhood as his evil one. The real Phœbe is visible only through a very good telescope.'

"About a year afterward," continued Captain Maloné, "I was walking down a street that crossed the Poydras 10 Market. An immensely stout, pink-faced lady in black satin crowded me from the narrow sidewalk with a frown. Behind her trailed a little man laden to the gunwales with bundles and bags of goods and vegetables.

"It was Kearny—but changed. I stopped and shook 15 one of his hands, which still clung to a bag of garlic and red peppers.

"How is the luck, old *companero*?' I asked him. I had not the heart to tell him the truth about his star.

"Well,' said he, 'I am married, as you may guess.' 20

"Francis!' called the big lady, in deep tones, 'are you going to stop in the street talking all day?'

"I am coming, Phœbe dear,' said Kearny, hastening after her."

Captain Maloné ceased again. 25

"After all, do you believe in luck?" I asked.

"Do you?" answered the captain, with his ambiguous smile shaded by the brim of his soft straw hat.

## THE MAN WHO WAS

By RUDYARD KIPLING

LET it be clearly understood that the Russian is a delightful person till he tucks his shirt in. As an Oriental he is charming. It is only when he insists upon being treated as the most easterly of Western peoples, instead of  
5 the most westerly of Easterns, that he becomes a racial anomaly extremely difficult to handle. The host never knows which side of his nature is going to turn up next.

Dirkovitch was a Russian—a Russian of the Russians, as he said—who appeared to get his bread by serving the  
10 czar as an officer in a Cossack regiment, and corresponding for a Russian newspaper with a name that was never twice the same. He was a handsome young Oriental, with a taste for wandering through unexplored portions of the earth, and he arrived in India from nowhere in particular.  
15 At least no living man could ascertain whether it was by way of Balkh, Budukhshan, Chitral, Beloochistan, Nepaul, or anywhere else. The Indian government, being in an unusually affable mood, gave orders that he was to be civilly treated, and shown everything that was to be  
20 seen; so he drifted, talking bad English and worse French, from one city to another till he foregathered with her Majesty's White Hussars in the city of Peshawur, which stands at the mouth of that narrow sword-cut in the hills that men call the Khyber Pass. He was undoubtedly an  
25 officer, and he was decorated, after the manner of the Russians, with little enameled crosses, and he could talk, and (though this has nothing to do with his merits) he had been given up as a hopeless task or case by the Black



Tyrones, who, individually and collectively, with hot whisky and honey, mulled brandy and mixed spirits of all kinds, had striven in all hospitality to make him drunk. And when the Black Tyrones, who are exclusively Irish, fail to disturb the peace of head of a foreigner, that foreigner is certain to be a superior man. This was the argument of the Black Tyrones, but they were ever an unruly and self-opinionated regiment, and they allowed junior subalterns of four years' service to choose their wines. The spirits were always purchased by the colonel and a committee of majors. And a regiment that would so behave may be respected but cannot be loved. 5 10

The White Hussars were as conscientious in choosing their wine as in charging the enemy. There was a brandy that had been purchased by a cultured colonel a few years after the battle of Waterloo. It has been maturing ever since, and it was a marvelous brandy at the purchasing. The memory of that liquor would cause men to weep as they lay dying in the teak forests of upper Burmah or the slime of the Irrawaddy. And there was a port which was notable; and there was a champagne of an obscure brand, which always came to mess without any labels, because the White Hussars wished none to know where the source of supply might be found. The officer on whose head the champagne choosing lay, was forbidden the use of tobacco for six weeks previous to sampling. 15 20 25

This particularity of detail is necessary to emphasize the fact that that champagne, that port, and above all, that brandy—the green and yellow and white liqueurs did not count—was placed at the absolute disposition of Dirkovitch, and he enjoyed himself hugely—even more than among the Black Tyrones. 30

But he remained distressingly European through it all. The White Hussars were—"My dear true friends,"

"Fellow-soldiers glorious," and "Brothers inseparable." He would unburden himself by the hour on the glorious future that awaited the combined arms of England and Russia when their hearts and their territories should run side by side, and the great mission of civilizing Asia should begin. That was unsatisfactory, because Asia is not going to be civilized after the methods of the West. There is too much Asia, and she is too old. You cannot reform a lady of many lovers, and Asia has been insatiable in her flirtations aforetime. She will never attend Sunday school, or learn to vote save with swords for tickets.

Dirkovitch knew this as well as any one else, but it suited him to talk special-correspondently and to make himself as genial as he could. Now and then he volunteered a little, a very little, information about his own Sotnia of Cossacks, left apparently to look after themselves somewhere at the back of beyond. He had done rough work in Central Asia, and had seen rather more help-yourself fighting than most men of his years. But he was careful never to betray his superiority, and more than careful to praise on all occasions the appearance, drill, uniform, and organization of her Majesty's White Hussars. And, indeed, they were a regiment to be admired. When Mrs. Durgan, widow of the late Sir John Durgan, arrived in their station, and after a short time had been proposed to by every single man at mess, she put the public sentiment very neatly when she explained that they were all so nice that unless she could marry them all, including the colonel and some majors who were already married, she was not going to content herself with one of them. Wherefore she wedded a little man in a rifle regiment—being by nature contradictory—and the White Hussars were going to wear crape on their arms, but compromised by attending the wedding in full force, and lining the aisle

with unutterable reproach. She had jilted them all—from Basset-Holmer, the senior captain, to Little Mildred, the last subaltern, and he could have given her four thousand a year and a title. He was a viscount, and on his arrival the mess had said he had better go into the Guards, 5 because they were all sons of large grocers and small clothiers in the Hussars, but Mildred begged very hard to be allowed to stay, and behaved so prettily that he was forgiven, and became a man, which is much more important than being any sort of viscount. 10

The only persons who did not share the general regard for the White Hussars were a few thousand gentlemen of Jewish extraction who lived across the border, and answered to the name of Pathan. They had only met the regiment officially, and for something less than twenty 15 minutes, but the interview, which was complicated with many casualties, had filled them with prejudice. They even called the White Hussars “children of the devil,” and sons of persons whom it would be perfectly impossible to meet in decent society. Yet they were not above 20 making their aversion fill their money belts. The regiment possessed carbines, beautiful Martini-Henri carbines, that would cob a bullet into an enemy’s camp at one thousand yards, and were even handier than the long rifle. Therefore they were coveted all along the border, and since de- 25 mand inevitably breeds supply, they were supplied at the risk of life and limb for exactly their weight in coined silver—seven and one half pounds of rupees, or sixteen pounds and a few shillings each, reckoning the rupee at par. They were stolen at night by snaky-haired thieves that 30 crawled on their stomachs under the nose of the sentries; they disappeared mysteriously from armracks; and in the hot weather, when all the doors and windows were open, they vanished like puffs of their own smoke. The

border people desired them first for their own family vendettas, and then for contingencies. But in the long cold nights of the Northern Indian winter they were stolen most extensively. The traffic of murder was liveliest among the hills at that season, and prices ruled high. The regimental guards were first doubled and then trebled. A trooper does not much care if he loses a weapon—government must make it good—but he deeply resents the loss of his sleep. The regiment grew very angry, and one night-thief who managed to limp away bears the visible marks of their anger upon him to this hour. That incident stopped the burglaries for a time, and the guards were reduced accordingly, and the regiment devoted itself to polo with unexpected results, for it beat by two goals to one that very terrible polo corps the Lushkar Light Horse, though the latter had four ponies apiece for a short hour's fight, as well as a native officer who played like a lambent flame across the ground.

Then they gave a dinner to celebrate the event. The Lushkar team came, and Dirkovitch came, in the fullest full uniform of Cossack officer, which is as full as a dressing-gown, and was introduced to the Lushkars, and opened his eyes as he regarded them. They were lighter men than the Hussars, and they carried themselves with the swing that is the peculiar right of the Punjab frontier force and all irregular horse. Like everything else in the service, it has to be learned; but, unlike many things, it is never forgotten, and remains on the body till death.

The great beam-roofed mess room of the White Hussars was a sight to be remembered. All the mess plate was on the long table—the same table that had served up the bodies of five dead officers in a forgotten fight long and long ago—the dingy, battered standards faced the door of entrance, clumps of winter roses lay between the silver

candlesticks, the portraits of eminent officers deceased looked down on their successors from between the heads of sambhur, nilghai, maikhor, and, pride of all the mess, two grinning snow-leopards that had cost Basset-Holmer four months' leave that he might have spent in England instead of on the road to Thibet, and the daily risk of his life on ledge, snowslide, and glassy grass slope. 5

The servants, in spotless white muslin and the crest of their regiments on the brow of their turbans, waited behind their masters, who were clad in the scarlet and gold of the White Hussars and the cream and silver of the Lushkar Light Horse. 10 Dirkovitch's dull green uniform was the only dark spot at the board, but his big onyx eyes made up for it. He was fraternizing effusively with the captain of the Lushkar team, who was wondering how many of Dirkovitch's Cossacks his own long, lathy down-countrymen could account for in a fair charge. 15 But one does not speak of these things openly.

The talk rose higher and higher, and the regimental band played between the courses, as is the immemorial custom, till all tongues ceased for a moment with the removal of the dinner slips and the First Toast of Obligation, when the colonel, rising, said, "Mr. Vice, the Queen," and Little Mildred from the bottom of the table answered, "The Queen, God bless her!" and the big spurs clanked as the big men heaved themselves up and drank the Queen, upon whose pay they were falsely supposed to pay their mess bills. 20 That sacrament of the mess never grows old, and never ceases to bring a lump into the throat of the listener wherever he be, by land or by sea. Dirkovitch rose with his "brothers glorious," but he could not understand. No one but an officer can understand what the toast means; and the bulk have more sentiment than comprehension. 25 It all comes to the same in the end, as the

enemy said when he was wriggling on a lance point. Immediately after the little silence that follows on the ceremony there entered the native officer who had played for the Lushkar team. He could not of course eat with the  
5 alien, but he came in at dessert, all six feet of him, with the blue-and-silver turban atop, and the big black top-boots below. The mess rose joyously as he thrust forward the hilt of his saber, in token of fealty, for the colonel of the White Hussars to touch, and dropped into a vacant  
10 chair amid shouts of "*Rung ho!* Hira Singh!" (which being translated means "Go in and win!"). "Did I whack you over the knee, old man?" "Ressaidar Sahib, what the devil made you play that kicking pig of a pony in the last ten minutes?" "Shabash, Ressaidar Sahib!"  
15 Then the voice of the colonel, "The health of Ressaidar Hira Singh!"

After the shouting had died away, Hira Singh rose to reply, for he was the cadet of a royal house, the son of a king's son, and knew what was due on these occasions.  
20 Thus he spoke in the vernacular:—

"Colonel Sahib and officers of this regiment, much honor have you done me. This will I remember. We came down from afar to play you; but we were beaten." ("No fault of yours, Ressaidar Sahib. Played on our  
25 own ground, y'know. Your ponies were cramped from the railway. Don't apologize.") "Therefore perhaps we will come again if it be so ordained." ("Hear! Hear, hear, indeed! Bravo! Hsh!") "Then we will play you afresh" ("Happy to meet you"), "till there are left no  
30 feet upon our ponies. Thus far for sport." He dropped one hand on his sword hilt and his eye wandered to Dirko-vitch lolling back in his chair. "But if by the will of God there arises any other game which is not the polo game, then be assured, Colonel Sahib and officers, that we shall

play it out side by side, though *they*”—again his eye sought Dirkovitch—“though *they*, I say, have fifty ponies to our one horse.” And with a deep-mouthed *Rung ho!* that rang like a musket butt on flagstones, he sat down amid shoutings.

Dirkovitch, who had devoted himself steadily to the brandy—the terrible brandy aforementioned—did not understand, nor did the expurgated translations offered to him at all convey the point. Decidedly the native officer’s was the speech of the evening, and the clamor might have continued to the dawn had it not been broken by the noise of a shot without that sent every man feeling at his defenseless left side. It is notable that Dirkovitch “reached back,” after the American fashion—a gesture that set the captain of the Lushkar team wondering how Cossack officers were armed at mess. Then there was a scuffle, and a yell of pain.

“Carbine stealing again!” said the adjutant, calmly sinking back in his chair. “This comes of reducing the guards. I hope the sentries have killed him.”

The feet of armed men pounded on the veranda flags, and it sounded as though something was being dragged.

“Why don’t they put him in the cells till the morning?” said the colonel, testily. “See if they’ve damaged him, sergeant.”

The mess-sergeant fled out into the darkness, and returned with two troopers and a corporal, all very much perplexed.

“Caught a man stealin’ carbines, sir,” said the corporal. “Leastways ’e was crawling toward the barricks, sir, past the main-road sentries; an’ the sentry ’e says, sir—”

The limp heap of rags upheld by the three men groaned. Never was seen so destitute and demoralized an Afghan. He was turbanless, shoeless, caked with dirt, and all but

dead with rough handling. Hira Singh started slightly at the sound of the man's pain. Dirkovitch took another liqueur glass of brandy.

"*What* does the sentry say?" said the colonel.

5 "Sez he speaks English, sir," said the corporal.

"So you brought him into mess instead of handing him over to the sergeant! If he spoke all the tongues of the Pentecost you've no business—"

Again the bundle groaned and muttered. Little Mildred  
10 had risen from his place to inspect. He jumped back as though he had been shot.

"Perhaps it would be better, sir, to send the men away," said he to the colonel, for he was a much-privileged subaltern. He put his arms round the rag-bound horror as  
15 he spoke, and dropped him into a chair. It may not have been explained that the littleness of Mildred lay in his being six feet four, and big in proportion. The corporal, seeing that an officer was disposed to look after the capture, and that the colonel's eye was beginning to  
20 blaze, promptly removed himself and his men. The mess was left alone with the carbine thief, who laid his head on the table and wept bitterly, hopelessly, and inconsolably, as little children weep.

Hira Singh leaped to his feet with a long-drawn vernacular oath. "Colonel Sahib," said he, "that man is no  
25 Afghan, for they weep '*Ai! Ai!*' Nor is he of Hindustan, for they weep '*Oh! Ho!*' He weeps after the fashion of the white men, who say '*Ow! Ow!*'"

"Now where the dickens did you get that knowledge,  
30 Hira Singh?" said the captain of the Lushkar team.

"Hear him!" said Hira Singh, simply, pointing at the crumpled figure that wept as though it would never cease.

"He said, '*My God!*'" said Little Mildred. "I heard him say it."



The colonel and the mess room looked at the man in silence. It is a horrible thing to hear a man cry. A woman can sob from the top of her palate, or her lips, or anywhere else, but a man cries from his diaphragm, and it rends him to pieces. Also, the exhibition causes the 5 throat of the on-looker to close at the top.

"Poor devil!" said the colonel, coughing tremendously.

"We ought to send him to hospital. He's been man-handled."

Now the adjutant loved his rifles. They were to him 10 as his grandchildren—the men standing in the first place. He grunted rebelliously: "I can understand an Afghan stealing, because he's made that way. But I can't understand his crying. That makes it worse."

The brandy must have affected Dirkovitch, for he lay 15 back in his chair and stared at the ceiling. There was nothing special in the ceiling beyond a shadow as of a huge black coffin. Owing to some peculiarity in the construction of the mess room this shadow was always thrown when the candles were lighted. It never disturbed the 20 digestion of the White Hussars. They were, in fact, rather proud of it.

"Is he going to cry all night?" said the colonel, "or are we supposed to sit up with Little Mildred's guest until he feels better?" 25

The man in the chair threw up his head and stared at the mess. Outside, the wheels of the first of those bidden to the festivities crunched the roadway.

"Oh, my God!" said the man in the chair, and every 30 soul in the mess rose to his feet. Then the Lushkar captain did a deed for which he ought to have been given the Victoria Cross—distinguished gallantry in a fight against overwhelming curiosity. He picked up his team with his eyes as the hostess picks up the ladies at the

opportune moment, and pausing only by the colonel's chair to say, "This isn't *our* affair, you know, sir," led the team into the veranda and the gardens. Hira Singh was the last, and he looked at Dirkovitch as he moved.

5 But Dirkovitch had departed into a brandy paradise of his own. His lips moved without sound, and he was studying the coffin on the ceiling.

"White—white all over," said Basset-Holmer, the adjutant. "What a pernicious renegade he must be! I  
10 wonder where he came from?"

The colonel shook the man gently by the arm, and "Who are you?" said he.

There was no answer. The man stared round the mess room and smiled in the colonel's face. Little Mildred,  
15 who was always more of a woman than a man till "Boot and saddle" was sounded, repeated the question in a voice that would have drawn confidences from a geyser. The man only smiled. Dirkovitch, at the far end of the table, slid gently from his chair to the floor. No son of Adam,  
20 in this present imperfect world, can mix the Hussars' champagne with the Hussars' brandy by five and eight glasses of each without remembering the pit whence he has been digged and descending thither. The band began to play the tune with which the White Hussars, from the  
25 date of their formation, preface all their functions. They would sooner be disbanded than abandon that tune. It is a part of their system. The man straightened himself in his chair and drummed on the table with his fingers.

"I don't see why we should entertain lunatics," said  
30 the colonel; "call a guard and send him off to the cells. We'll look into the business in the morning. Give him a glass of wine first, though."

Little Mildred filled a sherry glass with the brandy and thrust it over to the man. He drank, and the tune rose

louder, and he straightened himself yet more. Then he put out his long-taloned hands to a piece of plate opposite and fingered it lovingly. There was a mystery connected with that piece of plate in the shape of a spring, which converted what was a seven-branched candlestick, three 5 springs each side and one in the middle, into a sort of wheel-spoke candelabrum. He found the spring, pressed it, and laughed weakly. He rose from his chair and inspected a picture on the wall, then moved on to another picture, the mess watching him without a word. When he 10 came to the mantelpiece he shook his head and seemed distressed. A piece of plate representing a mounted hussar in full uniform caught his eye. He pointed to it, and then to the mantelpiece, with inquiry in his eyes.

"What is it—oh, what is it?" said Little Mildred. 15 Then, as a mother might speak to a child, "That is a horse—yes, a horse."

Very slowly came the answer, in a thick, passionless, guttural: "Yes, I—have seen. But—where is *the* horse?"

You could have heard the hearts of the mess beating 20 as the men drew back to give the stranger full room in his wanderings. There was no question of calling the guard.

Again he spoke, very slowly, "Where is *our* horse?"

There is no saying what happened after that. There 25 is but one horse in the White Hussars, and his portrait hangs outside the door of the mess room. He is the piebald drum-horse, the king of the regimental band, that served the regiment for seven-and-thirty years, and in the end was shot for old age. Half the mess tore the 30 thing down from its place and thrust it into the man's hands. He placed it above the mantelpiece; it clattered on the ledge, as his poor hands dropped it, and he staggered toward the bottom of the table, falling into Mildred's

chair. The band began to play the "River of Years" waltz, and the laughter from the gardens came into the tobacco-scented mess room. But nobody, even the youngest, was thinking of waltzes. They all spoke to one another something after this fashion: "The drum-horse hasn't hung over the mantelpiece since '67." "How does he know?" "Mildred, go and speak to him again." "Colonel, what are you going to do?" "Oh, dry up, and give the poor devil a chance to pull himself together!"

10 "It isn't possible, anyhow. The man's a lunatic."

Little Mildred stood at the colonel's side talking into his ear. "Will you be good enough to take your seats, please, gentlemen?" he said, and the mess dropped into the chairs.

15 Only Dirkovitch's seat, next to Little Mildred's, was blank, and Little Mildred himself had found Hira Singh's place. The wide-eyed mess sergeant filled the glasses in dead silence. Once more the colonel rose, but his hand shook, and the port spilled on the table as he looked

20 straight at the man in Little Mildred's chair and said, hoarsely, "Mr. Vice, the Queen." There was a little pause, but the man sprang to his feet and answered, without hesitation, "The Queen, God bless her!" and as he emptied the thin glass he snapped the shank between

25 his fingers.

Long and long ago, when the Empress of India was a young woman, and there were no unclean ideals in the land, it was the custom in a few messes to drink the Queen's toast in broken glass, to the huge delight of the mess

30 contractors. The custom is now dead, because there is nothing to break anything for, except now and again the word of a government, and that has been broken already.

"That settles it," said the colonel, with a gasp. "He's not a sergeant. What in the world is he?"

The entire mess echoed the word, and the volley of questions would have scared any man. Small wonder that the ragged, filthy invader could only smile and shake his head.

From under the table, calm and smiling urbanely, rose 5  
Dirkovitch, who had been roused from healthful slumber by feet upon his body. By the side of the man he rose, and the man shrieked and groveled at his feet. It was a horrible sight, coming so swiftly upon the pride and glory of the toast that had brought the strayed wits together. 10

Dirkovitch made no offer to raise him, but Little Mildred heaved him up in an instant. It is not good that a gentleman who can answer to the Queen's toast should lie at the feet of a subaltern of Cossacks.

The hasty action tore the wretch's upper clothing 15  
nearly to the waist, and his body was seamed with dry black scars. There is only one weapon in the world that cuts in parallel lines, and it is neither the cane nor the cat. Dirkovitch saw the marks, and the pupils of his eyes dilated—also, his face changed. He said some- 20  
thing that sounded like "Shto ve takete;" and the man, fawning, answered, "Chetyre."

"What's that?" said everybody together.

"His number. That is number four, you know." 25  
Dirkovitch spoke very thickly.

"What has a Queen's officer to do with a qualified number?" said the colonel, and there rose an unpleasant growl round the table.

"How can I tell?" said the affable Oriental, with a sweet smile. "He is a—how you have it?—escape— 30  
runaway, from over there."

He nodded toward the darkness of the night.

"Speak to him, if he'll answer you, and speak to him gently," said Little Mildred, settling the man in a chair.

It seemed most improper to all present that Dirkovitch should sip brandy as he talked in purring, spitting Russian to the creature who answered so feebly and with such evident dread. But since Dirkovitch appeared to under-  
5 stand, no man said a word. They breathed heavily, leaning forward, in the long gaps of the conversation. The next time that they have no engagements on hand the White Hussars intend to go to St. Petersburg and learn Russian.

“He does not know how many years ago,” said Dirko-  
10 vitch, facing the mess, “but he says it was very long ago, in a war. I think that there was an accident. He says he was of this glorious and distinguished regiment in the war.”

“The rolls! The rolls! Holmer, get the rolls!” said  
15 Little Mildred, and the adjutant dashed off bareheaded to the orderly room where the rolls of the regiment were kept. He returned just in time to hear Dirkovitch conclude, “Therefore I am most sorry to say there was an accident, which would have been reparable if he had  
20 apologized to that our colonel, which he had insulted.”

Another growl, which the colonel tried to beat down. The mess was in no mood to weigh insults to Russian colonels just then.

“He does not remember, but I think that there was  
25 an accident, and so he was not exchanged among the prisoners, but he was sent to another place—how do you say?—the country. So, he says, he came here. He does not know how he came. Eh? He was at Chepany”—the man caught the word, nodded, and shivered—“at  
30 Zhigansk and Irkutsk. I cannot understand how he escaped. He says, too, that he was in the forests for many years, but how many years he has forgotten—that with many things. It was an accident; done because he did not apologize to that our colonel. Ah!”

Instead of echoing Dirkovitch's sigh of regret, it is sad to record that the White Hussars lively exhibited unchristian delight and other emotions, hardly restrained by their sense of hospitality. Holmer flung the frayed and yellow regimental rolls on the table, and the men 5 flung themselves atop of these.

"Steady! Fifty-six—fifty-five—fifty-four," said Holmer. "Here we are. 'Lieutenant Austin Limmason—*missing*.' That was before Sebastopol. What an infernal shame! Insulted one of their colonels, and was quietly 10 shipped off. Thirty years of his life wiped out."

"But he never apologized. Said he'd see him — first," chorused the mess.

"Poor devil! I suppose he never had the chance afterward. How did he come here?" said the colonel. 15

The dingy heap in the chair could give no answer.

"Do you know who you are?"

It laughed weakly.

"Do you know that you are Limmason—Lieutenant Limmason, of the White Hussars?" 20

Swift as a shot came the answer, in a slightly surprised tone, "Yes, I'm Limmason, of course." The light died out in his eyes, and he collapsed afresh, watching every motion of Dirkovitch with terror. A flight from Siberia may fix a few elementary facts in the mind, but it does 25 not lead to continuity of thought. The man could not explain how, like a homing pigeon, he had found his way to his own old mess again. Of what he had suffered or seen he knew nothing. He cringed before Dirkovitch as instinctively as he had pressed the spring of the candlestick, 30 sought the picture of the drum-horse, and answered to the Queen's toast. The rest was a blank that the dreaded Russian tongue could only in part remove. His head bowed on his breast, and he giggled and cowered alternately.

The devil that lived in the brandy prompted Dirko-vitch at this extremely inopportune moment to make a speech. He rose, swaying slightly, gripped the table edge, while his eyes glowed like opals, and began:—

5     “Fellow-soldiers glorious—true friends and hospitable. It was an accident, and deplorable—most deplorable.” Here he smiled sweetly all round the mess. “But you will think of this little, little thing. So little, is it not? The czar! Posh! I slap my fingers—I snap my fingers  
10 at him. Do I believe in him? No! But the Slav who has done nothing, *him* I believe. Seventy—how much?—millions that have done nothing—not one thing. Napoleon was an episode.” He banged a hand on the table. “Hear you, old peoples, we have done nothing in the world—out  
15 here. All our work is to do: and it shall be done, old peoples. Get away!” He waved his hand imperiously, and pointed to the man. “You see him. He is not good to see. He was just one little—oh, so little—accident, that no one remembered. Now he is *That*. So will you be,  
20 brother-soldiers so brave—so will you be. But you will never come back. You will all go where he has gone, or”—he pointed to the great coffin shadow on the ceiling, and muttering, “Seventy millions—get away, you old people,” fell asleep.

25     “Sweet, and to the point,” said Little Mildred. “What’s the use of getting wroth? Let’s make the poor devil comfortable.”

But that was a matter suddenly and swiftly taken from the loving hands of the White Hussars. The lieutenant  
30 had returned only to go away again three days later, when the wail of the “Dead March” and the tramp of the squadrons told the wondering station, that saw no gap in the table, an officer of the regiment had resigned his new-found commission.



And Dirkovitch—bland, supple, and always genial—went away too by a night train. Little Mildred and another saw him off, for he was the guest of the mess, and even had he smitten the colonel with the open hand the law of the mess allowed no relaxation of hospitality. 5

“Good-by, Dirkovitch, and a pleasant journey,” said Little Mildred.

“*Au revoir*, my true friends,” said the Russian.

“Indeed! But we thought you were going home?”

“Yes; but I will come again. My friends, is that road 10 shut?” He pointed to where the north star burned over the Khyber Pass.

“By Jove! I forgot. Of course. Happy to meet you, old man, any time you like. Got everything you want,—cheroots, ice, bedding? That’s all right. Well, *au revoir*, 15 Dirkovitch.”

“Um,” said the other man, as the tail-lights of the train grew small. “Of—all—the—unmitigated—”

Little Mildred answered nothing, but watched the north star, and hummed a selection from a recent bur- 20 lesque that had much delighted the White Hussars. It ran:—

“I’m sorry for Mister Bluebeard,  
I’m sorry to cause him pain;  
But a terrible spree there’s sure to be  
When he comes back again.” 25



## NOTES AND COMMENT

### WASHINGTON IRVING

Washington Irving was born in New York City, which had then a population of about 30,000, on the 3rd of April, 1783—a couple of weeks before George Washington announced to the Continental Army that the war of the Revolution was ended. He was set to reading law in his sixteenth year, but his health was poor, his pecuniary circumstances easy, his tastes literary, and he never gave serious attention to the legal profession. At nineteen, he contributed to his brother's journal, the *New York Morning Chronicle*, a series of papers in the style of Addison's *Spectator* essays, signed "Jonathan Oldstyle." In 1804 he was sent abroad for his health, which was not bad enough to prevent his having a gay and adventurous vacation in France, Italy, and England. On his return to America he seems to have had leisure and spirits for society, theater-going, and convivial larks with his boon companions. In his next noticeable effort as an author he again followed the form of the eighteenth century periodical essayists—*Salmagundi*, 1807. The promise of these first effusions of his humor was generously fulfilled in 1809 by the rich, chuckling burlesque of the Dutch governors of New Netherland in *Knickerbocker's History of New York*, a book of which it is not yet proper to be ignorant. Irving lived cheerfully on his celebrity and a share in the family business without greatly exerting himself till 1815, when he went to England to look after a branch of his brother's commercial house in Liverpool. Business reverses now threw him upon his literary talents for a livelihood. In 1819-1820, he published the *Sketch Book*, which brought him into honorable comparison with Addison, Goldsmith, and Sterne. He followed this up with his picture of English country life in *Bracebridge Hall*, 1822; *Tales of a Traveller*, 1824; the *Life and Voyages of Columbus*, 1828; the *Conquest of Granada*, 1829; and the *Alhambra*, 1832. He came home to America in 1832, a celebrated author; established himself in the following year as a country gentleman at Sunnyside on the Hudson near Sleepy Hollow; traveled in the American West; spent four years as ambassador in Madrid; compiled or edited annals of the American frontier; wrote lives of Goldsmith and Mahomet; and died in 1859 on

the completion of his five-volume *Life of George Washington*,—a “sterling, golden-hearted” old bachelor of seventy-six.

It is customary to say that Irving was the first American to win recognition abroad solely on his literary merits. It is frequently added that he was not distinctively American. Something can be said in support of this position. His parents were of English birth; his sojourn in England was long; his style was obviously formed on the purest English models; and America has produced no second Irving. He seems quite unrelated to either of the two predominant literature-producing impulses of the country. He is not of the New England Puritans; he knows nothing of their sin-stricken conscience, their austerity, their aspiration, their spiritual intensity and concentration; he neither acknowledges their sovereignty nor reacts against it. On the other hand he has nothing in common with the pioneering, speculative, material, expansive, insatiable, Yankee West. Yet Irving was a most loyal American, and it was, as he said, “the dearest wish of his heart to have a secure and cherished, though humble, corner in the good opinions and kind feelings of his countrymen.” The truth of the matter is that Irving’s spirit and talent were formed before America became so “distinctively” American—when on the tavern signs the cocked hat of General Washington had been but recently painted above the ruby face of King George. He is the last of the old colonial gentlemen possessed of leisure and intellectually well-to-do; the voice of a society more hospitable and hearty, of sounder and sweeter sentiment, more settled, temperate, and composed than most of us have known. If he writes like Addison, it is because he has, like Addison, the feelings of a gentleman and scholar of the old school. He has the high-bred ease and simplicity of the early Republic, not the cynical nonchalance of the modern Democracy. Unlike some of our later humorists, he has a deep love and veneration for the past, and a poet’s delight in the colors and shadows and glammers of history. He wished rather to bind than to break the threads of tradition that linked the old times to the new, and to bring to the cradle of the young literature of America the godmothering imagination of Europe. He discovered and enlarged the romantic background of his own people. An American still, after his own rare fashion, with portraits of Dutch ancestors, with tales of Spanish voyagers, with Indian legends, and lives of Revolutionary heroes, he strove pretty consistently—let us use his own words—“to clothe home scenes and places and familiar names with those imaginative and whimsical associations so seldom met with in our new

country, but which live like charms and spells about the cities of the old world, binding the heart of the native inhabitant to his home." (For an extended study of Irving, see *The Life and Letters of Washington Irving*, by Pierre M. Irving. For briefer treatment, *Washington Irving*, by Charles Dudley Warner in the American Men of Letters Series, and *Washington Irving*, by Henry W. Boynton in the Riverside Biographical Series.)

#### RIP VAN WINKLE

"Rip Van Winkle" first appeared in the *Sketch Book*, 1819.

**Diedrich Knickerbocker.** This is the pseudonym under which Irving put forth his burlesque account of the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam. He took some pains to give vitality to this imaginative character. Before the publication of *Knickerbocker's History of New York* he caused to be inserted in the *Evening Post* of October 26, 1809, the following notice:

#### DISTRESSING

Left his lodgings some time since, and has not since been heard of, a small elderly gentleman, dressed in an old black coat and cocked hat, by the name of *Knickerbocker*. As there are some reasons for believing he is not entirely in his right mind, and as great anxiety is entertained about him, any information concerning him left either at the Columbian Hotel, Mulberry street, or at the office of this paper, will be thankfully received.

P. S. Printers of newspapers would be aiding the cause of humanity in giving an insertion to the above.

In the same paper appeared on November 6 a letter signed "A Traveler," which reported that a person answering the description had been seen by passengers of the Albany stage, "resting himself by the side of the road, a little above King's Bridge." On November 16, "Seth Handaside," landlord of the Columbian Hotel, wrote to the paper, saying that nothing satisfactory had been heard concerning the "old gentleman," but that the manuscript of a very curious book had been found in his room at the hotel, which would be sold "to pay off his bill for boarding and lodging." On the 6th of December the *American Citizen* announced the publication of Knickerbocker's *History of New York*; for further details of his life and death, see the prefatory matter included in the "History."

**3, 18-19. Its chief merit is its scrupulous accuracy.** "Many of the descendants of the original colonists, however, looked at it with a less indulgent eye. This irreverent handling of their Dutch ancestors, and conversion of the field of sober history into a region of comic romance, was not to their taste." P. M. Irving's *Life and Letters of Washington Irving*, Vol. I, p. 239. For G. C. Verplanck's criticism of the work before the New York Historical Society, see the same volume, pp. 240-242.

**4, 6-7. "More in sorrow than in anger."** Horatio's description of the ghost, *Hamlet*, I, ii.

**4, 13-14. Waterloo Medal.** This medal was awarded to all survivors of the battle of Waterloo. On one side appears the bust of the Prince Regent; on the other, the name of Wellington and the date of his great victory, June 18, 1815. Presumably it is the Prince Regent that is thus given "a chance for immortality."

**4, 14. Queen Anne's Farthing.** Dean Swift suggested that current history be commemorated on the copper coinage; hence the issue of the celebrated farthings. "These have been the cause of an extraordinary delusion to the effect that a very small number (some say three) of these pieces were struck, and that their value is a thousand pounds each, instead of usually some shillings." See the article on Numismatics in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

**5, 3-4. Peter Stuyvesant:** the last Dutch governor of New Netherland, distinguished by a despotic temper and a wooden leg bound with silver. "This most excellent governor commenced his administration on the 29th of May, 1647": *Knickerbocker's History*. For Irving's account of the troublesome reign of "Peter the Headstrong" see Books V-VII.

**5, 16. Siege of Fort Christina.** See *Knickerbocker's History*, Book VI, Chap. VIII. This chapter contains a list of "the sturdy chivalry of the Hudson," including the Van Winkles.

**9, 7. Smoked his pipe incessantly.** In 1614, according to Diedrich Knickerbocker, the governor of Virginia sent a ship to demand the submission of the Dutch settlements to the English crown. On hearing this news, the worthy burghers of Communipaw "were seized with such a panic, that they fell to smoking their pipes with astonishing vehemence; insomuch that they quickly raised a cloud, which, combining with the surrounding woods and marshes, completely enveloped and concealed their beloved village, and overhung the fair regions of Pavonia—so that the terrible Captain Argal passed on, totally unsuspecting that a sturdy little Dutch settlement lay snugly couched

in the mud, under cover of all the pestilent vapor. In commemoration of this fortunate escape, the worthy inhabitants have continued to smoke, almost without intermission, unto this very day." Book II, Chap. III.

**16, 26-28. He recognized on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George.** This humorous symbol of political transformation is particularly ingenious in that it indicates at a single stroke both the old and the new state of affairs. It may have been suggested to Irving by the 122nd *Spectator*, in which is described how the portrait of Sir Roger on the inn-keeper's sign-post was converted at the knight's request into the Saracen's Head. "Notwithstanding it was made to frown and stare in a most extraordinary manner," says the *Spectator*, "I could still discover a distant resemblance of my old friend."

**17, 23. Federal or Democrat.** The Federalist Party, of which Alexander Hamilton and John Adams were leaders, held that all powers not specifically reserved to the States were conferred by the Constitution on the national Government. The Democratic or Democratic-Republican Party, of which Jefferson was the leader, took the contrary view, insisting upon a strict limitation of the central authority and the reservation to the States of all powers not expressly assigned by the Constitution to the national Government.

**18, 3-4. A tory!** one opposed to the Revolution and the Constitution; a person with British sympathies.

**18, 22-23. Stony Point:** a fortified promontory on the west side of the Hudson, recaptured from the British in July, 1779, in a brilliant midnight attack led by General Anthony Wayne.

**18, 24. Antony's Nose.** For the legend attached to this nose, see *Knickerbocker's History*, Book VI, Chap. IV.

**20, 10-11. A fit of passion at a New England peddler.** *Knickerbocker's History* has many passages illustrating the natural antipathy between the mercurial temperament of the New Englanders and the phlegmatic temperament of the Dutch. In Book III, Chap. VIII, the Connecticut Yankee is represented as a peddler by instinct—"Gangs of these marauders, we are told, penetrated into the New Netherland settlements, and threw whole villages into consternation by their unparalleled volubility, and their intolerable inquisitiveness." In the preceding chapter, their hard bargaining is discussed.

**21, 1. The historian of that name.** Adrian van der Donck, Doctor of Laws and Advocate of the Supreme Court of Holland, came

to America in 1642. His account of New Netherland (written in Dutch) was published at Amsterdam in 1655.

**23, 1. Hendrick Hudson.** "Knickerbocker" preserves the Dutch form of the name as in his *History*. In 1609 Henry Hudson, the English explorer, discovered the river which bears his name, and sailed up it in the Half-Moon to the neighborhood of the present city of Albany, searching for a northwest passage to China.

**23, 7. A little German superstition.** Frederick Barbarossa (Rothbart or Redbeard), a Roman emperor of the twelfth century, lives still, according to the legend, spellbound in a castle underground. He sits on an ivory throne, and his fiery beard has grown through the marble table upon which he rests his head. He must remain in his subterranean prison as long as the ravens fly about the mountain. A poetical rendering of this "little German superstition" was made by a German contemporary of Irving's, J. M. F. Rückert. Irving himself treated a similar theme in the "Legend of the Enchanted Soldier," one of the tales of the *Alhambra*.

## NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in 1804 into an old New England family living in an ancient house in Salem, Massachusetts—a town famous of yore for its persecution of witches, its sea-faring merchants and its daring privateers. He attended school in Salem, and was at Bowdoin College with Longfellow and Franklin Pierce from 1821 to 1825. While at college he had fixed upon authorship as his career, and, on completing his course, returned to his native town and shut himself up in utmost seclusion for twelve years to study and write. His first important book was the first series of *Twice-Told Tales*, 1837. In 1839 Hawthorne became engaged to be married. In the same year a desire to know something of active life, perhaps coupled with a desire to increase his revenues, induced him to accept an appointment as weigher and gauger in the Boston custom-house. He extended his acquaintance with life in 1841 by agricultural exercise with the social philosophers who at Brook Farm in West Roxbury were making their celebrated experiment in plain living and high thinking. In 1842, he was happily married; went to live in the Old Manse in Concord, where he saw as much of Emerson and Thoreau as he desired; and published a second series of *Twice-Told Tales*. In 1846 he published *Mosses from an Old Manse*, and moved to Salem, where he was appointed surveyor in the custom-house, a position which he



held till 1849. In the following year he put forth a masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter*; and, having removed to the beautiful village of Lenox in the Berkshire Hills, began spinning his fancies and memories of Salem into *The House of the Seven Gables*. This second great New England romance appeared in 1851, as did also *The Snow Image, and Other Tales*. In 1852 he returned to philosophic Concord, bought Bronson Alcott's place, The Wayside, and brought out *The Blithedale Romance*, a work suggested by his experiences at Brook Farm. From 1853 to 1860 he resided abroad, for four years as consul at Liverpool. His last notable work, *The Marble Faun*, was the fruit of his sojourn in Italy. Besides the books mentioned, he produced several volumes for children, a *Life of Franklin Pierce*, and an account of English life in *Our Old Home*; he left also for posthumous publication a considerable mass of note book material and miscellaneous tales and romances. In 1864 he set out with his old friend Pierce to recuperate his gently declining health by a tour through Northern New England, but on the 19th of May at Plymouth, New Hampshire, he slipped without a token of change from sleep to his final rest.

(See the life of Hawthorne by Henry James, *English Men of Letters*; that by Moncure Conway, *Great Writers*; G. E. Woodberry, *American Men of Letters*. *Nathaniel Hawthorne and his Wife*, by Julian Hawthorne is intimate but diffuse.)

Hawthorne was a man of original insight but of somewhat restricted experience and sympathies. Literally speaking, he hardly stepped out of New England till the bulk of his work was completed; and figuratively speaking, he never stepped out of it. "New England," he said, "is quite as large a lump of earth as my heart can take in." And the New England which occupied his intense, brooding, solitary mind was the spiritually somber and chilly New England of the Puritans and their descendants. The peculiar fascination of his solemn fables is due in part to the careful felicity of his style. He knew, too, how to avail himself of all that was pungent and coloured in local tradition and colonial history: the glamour of popular superstitions, the glow of the alchemist's furnace, the conjurer's magic glass, the poisoner's potion, and the witch's fire. But Hawthorne was never content to hold his readers with the mere outward shows of things. Like Aylmer in the significant little story called "The Birthmark," he "spiritualized them all, and redeemed himself from materialism by his strong and eager aspiration towards the infinite. In his grasp the veriest clod of earth assumed a soul." He saw in

each individual man an actor in an ancient and continuous human tragedy, struggling among mortal shadows and fitfully illuminated by eternal light; and by the skilful employment of symbol and allegory he made the provincial New England scene the stage for moral transactions of permanent and universal import. His contemporary, Poe, excelled in imparting a physical shudder. He sent a tremor through the very framework of character. He looked, as no other writer of fiction has looked, into the dark places of the Puritan conscience. He was fascinated by the writhings of the worm that never dies. He found it difficult to form contacts with his fellow men because he was almost wholly engrossed in what they prefer not to communicate. No chronicler of man's visible adventures with circumstances, he was the pitiless historian of surrendered ideals, foiled hopes, covert shames, concealed ugliness and poverty of spirit, and all the serpentine passage and track of sin through the soul.

#### THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL

"The Minister's Black Veil" was published as one of the first series of *Twice-Told Tales*. It illustrates very well Hawthorne's more or less habitual resort to some external sign or badge as a symbol of the internal condition of his characters. Any one who is interested in the ways that stories originated in the author's mind should examine the jottings of story-subjects in Hawthorne's note-books. From these it appears that the symbol not infrequently presented itself to him and was recorded before he had any notion of the meaning to attach to it. In 1838, for example, he made this entry: "A person to catch fire-flies, and try to kindle his household fire with them. *It would be symbolical of something.*" At other times the meaning or moral idea comes first without definite image or symbol, for example: "Dr. Johnson's penance in Uttoxeter Market. A man who does penance in what might appear to lookers-on the most glorious and triumphal circumstance of his life. Each circumstance of the career of an apparently successful man to be a penance and torture to him on account of some fundamental error in early life." The idea of penance, again symbolically expressed, reappears many years later in *The Scarlet Letter*, which is perhaps the best commentary on "The Minister's Black Veil."

**32, 29-30.** It was that famous one where they tolled the wedding knell. See the story entitled "The Wedding Knell," which immediately precedes "The Minister's Black Veil" in the *Twice-Told Tales*.

## ETHAN BRAND

"Ethan Brand" was one of the results of Hawthorne's stay in North Adams, Massachusetts, in the summer and early fall of 1838. Descriptions of Graylock, the lime-kiln, the lime-burner, the diorama and the show-man, the soap-boiler, the dog, etc., appear as unrelated observations in the *American Note-Books*.

**43, 14. Graylock:** a mountain in Berkshire County, not far from North Adams. "Graylock, or Saddleback, is quite a respectable mountain; and I suppose the former name has been given to it because it often had a gray cloud, or lock of gray mist, upon its head." *American Note-Books*—Wed., July 26th, 1838.

**43, 26. Unpardonable Sin.** The idea of an unpardonable sin is supported by various passages in the New Testament, for example, *Matthew xii. 31, 32*; "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." John Bunyan tells us in *Grace Abounding* that this doctrine drove many to despair, and that he himself was afflicted for many years with a conviction that it was too late for him to look to Heaven—"for Christ would not forgive me, nor pardon my transgressions." The great American divine of the eighteenth century, Jonathan Edwards, discusses the subject in his treatise "Of Endless Punishment," and declares it manifest "that he that is guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, shall surely be damned, without any deliverance from his punishment, or end to it." The poet William Cowper thought himself destined to eternal punishment because he had not imitated the sacrifice of Isaac by taking his own life. The writer of these notes knew a few years ago an aged New England lady who suffered in her last days from a belief that she had committed the Unpardonable Sin.

**44, 16-17. Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains.** "Then I saw in my dream, that the Shepherds had them to another place, in a bottom, where was a door in the side of a hill, and they opened the door, and bid them look in. They looked in, therefore, and saw that within it was very dark and smoky; they also thought that they heard there a rumbling noise as of fire, and a cry of some tormented, and that they smelt the scent of brimstone. Then said Christian, What means this? The Shepherds told them, This is a by-way to hell." *Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 144 (Everyman).

**55, 2. Diorama.** "A mode of scenic representation, invented by Daguerre and Bouton, in which a painting is seen from a distance through a large opening. By a combination of transparent and opaque painting, and of transmitted and reflected light, and by contrivances such as screens and shutters, much diversity of scenic effect is produced." *Webster's International*.

**56, 17. Jew of Nuremberg.** The account of the "Jew of Nuremberg" appears to have been transcribed almost word for word from Hawthorne's note-book, but the diorama man is there described as a Dutchman or a German.

**59, 19. The Idea that possessed his life.** Compare the opening speech in Goethe's *Faust*. Hawthorne occupied himself very much with the mischief done in the world by the proud, selfish intellect that proceeds on its course without regard to social ties or moral consequences. Very impressive treatments of this theme will be found in "Lady Eleanore's Mantle" in *Twice-Told Tales*, and in "Rappaccini's Daughter" in *The Old Manse*.

## EDGAR ALLAN POE

Edgar Allan Poe was born in 1809 in Boston, where his parents were then playing at the Federal Street Theater. Orphaned at the age of two, he was taken into the family of John Allan, a Richmond tobacco merchant, who gave him a good preparatory education in this country and in England, and in February, 1826, entered him at the University of Virginia. In December of the same year Poe left the University with a brilliant record in Latin and French and gambling debts amounting to about twenty-five hundred dollars. Between 1827 and 1833, he served two years in the United States Army, attaining the rank of sergeant-major; was at West Point for several months but was dismissed in 1831 for various breaches of discipline; and published collections of his poems in Boston, 1827, in Baltimore, 1829, and in New York, 1831. In 1833, at the age of twenty-four, he made a beginning of his career as a writer of short stories with "A MS. Found in a Bottle," for which he received a hundred-dollar prize. On May 16, 1836, he married Virginia Clemm, a delicate child of thirteen, and he is said to have idolized her till her sad death in 1847. He was connected editorially with the *Southern Literary Messenger* in Richmond, 1835-1837; with the *Gentleman's Magazine* in Philadelphia, 1839-1840; and with *Graham's Magazine*, also in Philadelphia, 1841-1842. During his connection with these

magazines he wrote a great many critical notices of current English and American poetry, fiction, and drama. While he resided in Richmond and in Philadelphia he also produced a large proportion of his best short stories, for examples: "The Shadow," "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "William Wilson," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Masque of the Red Death," "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," and "The Gold Bug." In 1844 he removed to New York City, where he was associated with N. P. Willis's *Evening Mirror* and later with the *Broadway Journal*, in which he carried on a rather trivial attack on Longfellow. In 1845 he produced a great sensation by the publication of his most celebrated poem, "The Raven." Among the more notable stories of this later period may be mentioned "The Purloined Letter," "The Imp of the Perverse," and "The Cask of Amontillado." His serviceableness as an editor and his creative work had for years been impaired and interrupted by his addiction to liquor and drugs, and he died, after an obscure debauch, in a hospital at Baltimore, on October 7, 1849, in his forty-first year. (Biographies of Poe: G. E. Woodberry in *American Men of Letters*; J. A. Harrison's *Life and Letters of Poe*; John Macy in *Beacon Biographies*.)

Poe has impressed the world as one of the most original writers of America, and his works are perhaps more widely read to-day at home and abroad than those of any other American of his period. He passes in Virginia for a Southern genius; in England for a disciple of Coleridge; in France, where he has been extraordinarily popular, for a Gallic spirit; and in Germany for a Germanic follower of Hoffmann. As a matter of fact, he has no clear local, sectional, or national note. His fiction is rooted neither in history nor in the manners, morals and characters of his contemporaries. His home is in the shifting dream-world of the romantic imagination, where Italy, Libya, Germany, India, and England float on the stream of revery, where misty turrets, castellated abbeys, and gray hereditary halls tower for a moment like cloud palaces, congregate into dim, decaying cities, and dissolve again into the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass or the ghoulish-woodland of Weir. The peculiar power of his work results, as he himself recognized, from the union in him of the synthetic and the analytic faculties; he was at the same time a poet and a mathematician, a dreamer and a psychologist, a moody visionary and a keen, directive intelligence. As a poet—in verse or in prose—he harps with subtly hypnotic refrains and magical cadences upon eerie love, strange forms of madness, and horrible death in scenes of

enchancing melancholy and ruinous splendor. As an analytic intelligence, he exhibits a marvellous acuteness in solving the mysteries of crime, discovering purloined letters and buried treasure, and in deciphering cryptograms. When his "ratiocinative" faculty has the upper hand, he invents the detective story and creates M. Dupin, the father of our industriously ingenious contemporary, Sherlock Holmes. When the poetic faculty predominates, he gives us in a tale of ten pages the quintessence of a three-volume gothic romance of our forefathers, like Mrs. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*. In his finest stories the "poetic madness" is controlled by an exacting method, which he explained in several striking and extremely influential critical articles. His subject-matter is frequently unwholesome and generally unimportant, but both by practice and precept he contributed greatly to the development of the short story into a definite literary form.

#### THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

"The Fall of the House of Usher" first appeared in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine* in September, 1839. Most of the following notes are intended to emphasize the oddness and ambiguity of the books in Usher's library. It has been pointed out by various critics that Poe is frequently not acquainted with the learned works which he mentions in his writings with an air of easy familiarity; and on that ground he has been charged with affectation and vanity. In the case of his critical writings the charge made may be fairly sustained. In the case before us, however, it is clear that Usher's books are not mentioned to display Poe's learning, but to illustrate Usher's character, and, in a rather indefinable fashion, to enrich the "atmosphere" of the story.

**73, 14. Von Weber:** C. M. F. E. Von Weber (1786-1826), German musical composer. His most famous works are *Der Freischütz*, *Euryanthe* and *Oberon*.

**73, 29. Fuseli.** Henry Fuseli (1741-1825) was born in Switzerland but went to England in 1763, and with the encouragement of Sir Joshua Reynolds devoted himself to art. Like his friend William Blake, he was greatly influenced by the work of Michelangelo; and like Blake he delighted especially in painting strange, terrible, and supernatural subjects.

**76, 15. Sentience of all vegetable things.** The analogies between the animal world and the vegetable world and the "sentience of all

vegetable things"—a notion which attracted much scientific attention in the eighteenth century—were poetically elaborated by Erasmus Darwin in *The Loves of the Plants*, 1789.

**76, 18. Kingdom of inorganization.** The world of inorganic matter.

**77, 9. Gresset.** Jean Baptiste Louis Gresset (1709-1777) was a French poet and dramatist, educated by the Jesuits of Amiens. *Vert-vert* and *La Chartreuse* are humorous poems dealing with the life of convent and monastery.

**77, 10. Machiavelli.** Niccolò Machiavelli (1459-1527) was a famous Italian statesman, historian, and dramatist. *Belphegor* is a novel satirizing marriage.

**77, 10. Swedenborg.** Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was a Swedish administrator, scientist, philosopher, and mystical theologian. His treatise "Heaven and its Wonders, the World of Spirits, and Hell" gives a visionary account of the spiritual world. His works enjoyed a good deal of favor in Poe's time among the transcendentalists in England and in America. See Emerson's essay on Swedenborg in *Representative Men*.

**77, 11. Holberg.** Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754) is called the founder of Danish literature. He wrote copiously on a great variety of subjects, historical, legal, philosophical, and literary. In the English-speaking world he is thought of chiefly as a dramatist. "The Subterranean Voyage of Nicholas Klimm" is a poem originally written in Latin.

**77, 12. Robert Flud:** an English physician and mystical philosopher (1574-1637), indebted to Paracelsus, and holding beliefs related in a general way to those of Swedenborg. His works were collected in six volumes, 1638.

**77, 12. Jean D'Indaginé.** D'Indaginé, Flud, and De la Chambre are all mentioned as authorities in the article on chiromancy in Diderot's *Encyclopédie*:

**77, 13. De la Chambre:** French physician, man of letters, Academician (c. 1594-1669). He published in 1653 his *Discours sur les principes de la chiromancie*.

**77, 14. Tieck.** Johann Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853) was a German poet, critic, novelist, and writer of short stories. He was a leader in Germany of the romantic movement, with which Poe is sympathetic. "The Journey into the Blue Distance" (*Das alte Buch und die Reise ins Blaue hinein*) was published in 1835.

**77, 14. Campanella.** Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) was a

philosopher of the Italian Renaissance. His *City of the Sun* (*Civitas Solis*) is an account of an ideal commonwealth, inspired by Plato's *Republic*.

**77, 16. Eymeric de Gironne:** a Spanish canonist of the fourteenth century (1320-1399). He was appointed inquisitor-general of Aragon and was a zealous hunter of heretics. He wrote various works of piety and theology, but his most celebrated work is the account of the rules and procedure of the Inquisition, mentioned in the text.

**77, 17. Pomponius Mela.** Pomponius Mela was a Roman geographer who flourished in the first century of the Christian era. His description of the earth—*De Situ Orbis*—was translated into English by Arthur Golding in 1585.

**78, 18. Worst purposes of donjon-keep:** to torture captives or to imprison them and leave them to starve to death.

**82, 2. Sir Launcelot Canning.** Apparently this author was invented by Poe.

### THE GOLD-BUG

"The Gold-Bug" was first published as a prize story in the Philadelphia *Dollar Newspaper* in June, 1843.

**Bitten by the Tarantula.** According to an ancient popular superstition, the bite of the tarantula produced in the victim a peculiar dancing mania. The application is of course to the supposed lunacy of Legrand in consequence of the bite of the gold-bug.

**87, 16. Fort Moultrie.** Poe was at Fort Moultrie in the fall of 1827 as a member of Battery H of the First Artillery.

**88, 12. In quest of shells.** A few years before the publication of "The Gold-Bug," Poe had interested himself in "shells" in preparation for his not entirely creditable compilation, *The Conchologist's First Book*, 1839. See G. E. Woodberry's *Edgar Allan Poe*, pp. 111-113.

**88, 14. Swammerdamm.** Jan Swammerdamm (1637-1680) was a Dutch naturalist. His *Biblia naturae, sive Historia insectorum in certas classes redacta* was published 1737-1738.

**91, 16. Caput hominis:** "man's head."

**96, 12. Empressement:** "eagerness."

**118, 7. Captain Kidd.** William Kidd was born about 1645, probably in Scotland. He was commissioned to go in pursuit of hostile privateers and pirates, but he turned pirate himself, and was hanged at Execution Dock, London, in 1701. Treasure amounting to about \$70,000 was found in his ship and on Gardiner's Island, N. Y.



**120, 16. Golconda:** a ruined city of India associated by literary reference with jewels of fabulous value.

**120, 30. I have solved others.** Poe ran a puzzle column in *Alexander's Weekly Messenger*, in which he undertook to solve any cryptograph that was sent in to him. He says that "out of, perhaps, one hundred ciphers altogether received, there was only one which we did not immediately succeed in resolving. This one we *demonstrated* to be an imposition." In *Graham's Magazine*, July, 1841, he reopened the discussion of cryptographs with an article on "Secret Writing" and repeated his challenge. "It may be observed, generally," he says, "that in such investigations the analytic ability is very forcibly called into action; and, for this reason, cryptographical solutions might with great propriety be introduced into academies as the means of giving tone to the most important of the powers of mind." See Vol. xiv, pp. 114-149 in J. A. Harrison's *Complete Works of Poe*.

**121, 18-19. The Spanish Main.** The Caribbean Sea and adjacent coast,—the resort of pirates lying in wait for treasure and merchant vessels from South American ports.

### CHARLES DICKENS

Dickens was born in Portsea, February 7th, 1812, and spent some years of his childhood in Chatham; but he was brought to London while still a young boy and grew up there. His father—an optimistic ne'er-do-well, frequently in prison for debt—loved and neglected him. Dickens's rich but irregular education was derived from a collection of eighteenth century novels, a few years schooling, and the experiences of life. As a child he had lived within touch of ships, sailors, and the sea. As a drudge in a blacking warehouse in the most wretched days of his youth, he knew poverty and hunger and the inmates and aspects of slums, pawn-shops, and prisons. As a clerk in law-offices, 1827-8, he became acquainted with courts, pettifoggers, and their clients, and the tedious processes of the law. Then he learned shorthand and made himself, as he declared, "the best and most rapid reporter ever known": his newspaper work sent him to every nook and corner of London and perhaps to nearly every town in England. In 1833 he began to write for the periodicals papers which were collected and published in 1835 and 1836 as *Sketches by Boz*. In 1836 he married the daughter of one of his newspaper friends, and in that year commenced the triumphantly successful monthly publication of the *Papers of the Pickwick Club*.

While the Pickwick papers were running, he set to work on his first novel, *Oliver Twist*, 1837-8, and before that was completed, plunged into *Nicholas Nickleby*, 1838-9. From 1840 to 1841 he ran in weekly numbers *Master Humphrey's Clock*, containing *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge*. Now at the age of thirty an enormously popular author on both sides of the Atlantic, he made in 1842 a trip to America, where he was banqueted from Boston to St. Louis. On his return he published a book of travel, *American Notes*, 1842, and in 1843-4 *Martin Chuzzlewit*, a great English novel with a long satirical American digression. Some of his more important subsequent works are: *Dombey and Son*, 1846-8; his "autobiographical" novel, *David Copperfield*, 1849-50; *Bleak House*, 1852-3; *Hard Times*, 1854; *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859; *Great Expectations*, 1860-1; *Our Mutual Friend*, 1864-5. As editor, lecturer, and author he toiled with remorseless industry and at a high pitch of excitement almost till his death in 1870. (There are innumerable books on Dickens. The standard biography is by John Forster. The most stimulating criticism of recent years is G. K. Chesterton's *Charles Dickens*, 1906. F. G. Kitton's *Charles Dickens*, 1908, contains some fresh biographical material.)

The field of Dickens's fiction was wide but not unlimited. For the most part he left aristocratic and fashionable society to Disraeli and Bulwer Lytton; the clergy, high and low, to Trollope and Kingsley; the upper middle class to Thackeray; the learned and the rural population to George Eliot and the Brontës. A hearty, liberal Englishman of what he would have called the lower middle class, Dickens explored with especial gusto the lively, little-cultivated, impecunious masses of the urban population, which were in his time beginning to make themselves felt as a new force in politics. After one has read a dozen of his works, the scenes of the various novels insensibly dovetail in one's memory into a great grimy, dusty, musty, foggy, "smelly" city through which a grey river creeps by sombre warehouses, curious shops, dingy lodgings, and twinkling taverns to the sea. So, too, the quaint and grotesque characters, figures of incredible virtue and impossible vice—the Wellers and Pickwicks and Nells and Dombey and Micawbers and Gradgrinds and Gamps and Fagins and Pecksniffs—break from the covers in which their author confined them, and revel together in the imagination in a magnificent low comedy diversified with melodrama and interludes of happy poverty feasting on toast and tea in cosy parlors "warm and bright with fire and candle." This is to say that Dickens was not primarily a writer of

short stories. He did, indeed, throw off a number of effective short narratives like the "Christmas Carol," "Dr. Marigold," and "The Boots at the Holly-Tree Inn; but many of the briefer pieces which he fed to his magazines—for instance "The Wreck of the Golden Mary"—are brief only because he had not time to make them lengthy. Dickens did not much care for the single, foreordained, and cunningly contrived "effect" for which Poe strove. "The Signal-Man" is an exception, but it has little mark of its author's peculiar genius. Dickens had, so to speak, a "serial" imagination; he created a group of characters, fell in love with them, and ran after them to see what they were going to do next. He violated all the sacred "unities" as recklessly and as successfully as an Elizabethan dramatist.

### THE SIGNAL-MAN

"The Signal-Man" first appeared in 1866 in Dickens's weekly miscellany, *All the Year Round*. This was preceded by another short story called "The Trial for Murder." To the same periodical Dickens had contributed in 1859 two chapters of a ghostly series called *The Haunted House*: "The Mortals in the House" and "The Ghost in Master B.'s Room." In the period in which these stories were written there was a wide-spread revival of interest in occult phenomena. Mesmerism and spiritualism seemed in the middle of the nineteenth century to be laying new bases for belief in the immaterial world. Philosophers and men of science, who had long been in the habit of scoffing at apparitions, founded in 1882 the Society for Psychical Research for the express purpose of exploring the undiscovered country of phantasms.

### FRANK STOCKTON

"Frank" (Francis Richard) Stockton was born April 5, 1834, in Philadelphia, and was a graduate of the Philadelphia Central High School. His first intention was to study medicine; for several years he worked at wood engraving; and, although he was early a contributor to juvenile magazines, he was nearly forty before he made writing his profession. The turning-point in his career was 1872. In that year he joined the staff of the Philadelphia *Morning Post*, had a story—"Stephen Skarridge's Christmas"—accepted by *Scribner's Monthly*, and established himself in New York. From 1872 to 1882 he was associated successively with *Hearth and Home*, *Scribner's Monthly*, and *St. Nicholas*. After about ten years of office-

work, finding that he could depend upon a good income from his pen, he gave up his editorial position. He continued to spend part of each winter in New York, where he took pleasure in society and club life; but he bought a country place in New Jersey, where he could keep chickens and "two cows," and could dictate his tales to a stenographer while lying at his ease in a hammock in a grove of fir-trees. Three years before his death, which occurred in 1902, he acquired a fine estate in West Virginia, once owned by George Washington. Among his more popular volumes are: *Rudder Grange*, 1879; *The Lady, or the Tiger? and Other Stories*, 1884; *The Bee-Man of Orn and Other Fanciful Tales*, 1887; *The Squirrel Inn*, 1891; *The Watch-maker's Wife and Other Stories*, 1892; *The Adventures of Captain Horn*, 1895; and *The Great Stone of Sardis*, 1897. Nine of his best short stories were collected in 1895 in a volume called *A Chosen Few*. (A memorial sketch of Stockton by his wife appears in *The Captain's Toll-gate*, 1903.)

Stockton was a voluminous but insubstantial author, and it may be said in general that the longer his stories are the less there is in them. *The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine*, which runs just under a hundred pages, is excellent fooling vitalized by the sturdy reality of the two good women in the title. *The Squirrel Inn* becomes only mildly amusing some time before one reaches page 222. But one must be very idle indeed to reach the 347th page of *The Captain's Toll-gate*. As a novelist, Stockton is a midsummer-afternoon trifle. His plots are flimsy daydreams, most of his characters are creaking puppets, and his setting is stage land, smelling of the paint. He steers, for the most part, on a strange diagonal between realism and romance in quest of laughter. But though an extended cruise among his extravagant improbabilities is tedious, a short one is exhilarating. His playful humor and fantastic imagination are at their best in the loosely connected sketches of *Rudder Grange*, in the pure wonder tales of the *Bee Man of Orn*, and in a chosen few of his short stories, such as "The Lady, or the Tiger?" "Asaph," "His Wife's Deceased Sister," "The Remarkable Wreck of the 'Thomas Hyke,'" and "The Transferred Ghost."

### THOMAS HARDY

Thomas Hardy was born on June 2, 1840, in Dorsetshire, that county in southern England where he has passed the better part of his life. After an education in the local schools and attendance on

evening classes at King's College, London, he was articled, in 1856, to an ecclesiastical architect of Dorchester. For several years he devoted most of his time to measuring and drawing old country churches and working on Gothic architecture. In 1863 he won medals offered by the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architectural Association. In these earlier days his writing was chiefly in verse, but somewhere about his twenty-seventh year he began practice in prose, and in 1871 published his first novel. In 1874 he was married. Since 1871 his literary activity has been continuous. He has collected his verse in *Wessex Poems*, 1898, and *Poems of the Past and the Present*, 1901, and has also published a dramatic trilogy on the Napoleonic wars, *The Dynasts*, 1904-1908. His longer novels are: *Desperate Remedies*, 1871; *Under the Greenwood Tree*, 1872; *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, 1872-3; *Far from the Madding Crowd*, 1874; *The Hand of Ethelberta*, 1876; *The Return of the Native*, 1878; *The Trumpet Major*, 1879; *A Laodicean*, 1880-1; *Two on a Tower*, 1882; *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, 1884-5; *The Woodlanders*, 1886-7; *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, 1891; *The Well-Beloved*, 1892; *Jude the Obscure*, 1895. The following volumes contain tales and short stories: *Wessex Tales*, 1888; *A Group of Noble Dames*, 1891; *Life's Little Ironies*, 1894; *A Changed Man*, 1913. (See Lionel Johnson's *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, 1894, and Annie Macdonell's *Thomas Hardy*, 1894.)

Thomas Hardy's life and works are rooted deep in the soil of his native Dorsetshire, called Wessex in the novels, which already, in recognition of the glamour that he has created about it, is beginning to be known as the "Hardy country." With a sense of the pressure of antiquity in the present hour, he has constantly opened in his tales backward vistas which send the reader's imagination wandering past medieval cathedrals, Saxon villages, relics of the Roman occupation, and the grim Druidic ruins of Stonehenge into the dusky pre-Celtic Britain of the Stone Age. He is intimately acquainted with his countryside: paints with marvellous power sheep-cote, grange, hamlet, cathedral town, harvest field, rich vales and slow rivers, brown woods, bleak hills, and barren heath; is extremely sensitive to the changes in the face of Nature from season to season and profoundly impressed by her permanence from age to age. His favorite types of character may be roughly classified as follows: substantial yeomen and humorous, half-pagan, garrulous peasants with the soil clinging to them, like the gravediggers in Hamlet; half-trained young men and women with a bit of talent and touch of

aspiration who have been in the city and had a taste of modern civilization; lonely and perilously-lovely romantic heroines without an idea in their heads and with nothing to do but to wreck the lives of the young men in the preceding group. Hardy's central theme is passionate love thwarted and brought to disastrous issue by a conspiracy of the accidents in nature and the imperfections in man. He has a singular power of making the ruin of a milkmaid appear ordained from the foundation of the world, and as tragically significant as the fall of a king or queen of Pelops' line. No other English novelist of his eminence has commented upon life with such bitter irony, with—as happy, healthy young people say—such atrocious pessimism. It is also true that no other novelist has meditated so gravely, so steadily, upon the sadness of the human lot. His best novels have a kind of dramatic symmetry and clearness of structure. His vocabulary is extraordinarily rich and concrete, and he uses words with poetic tact, yet his style is true prose of a high order—pure, lucid, soberly beautiful. His short stories have in general the essential qualities of his longer works.

### THE THREE STRANGERS

"The Three Strangers" was first published in 1883, and was included in *Wessex Tales*, 1888. In this volume is a second tale, "The Withered Arm," also presenting a rural hangman. Mr. Hardy in a preface written in 1896 speaks of the child-like fascination exerted by this gruesome calling upon the imaginations of his Wessex peasants. "In the neighborhood of country-towns," he says, "tales of executions used to form a large proportion of the local traditions; . . . the writer of these pages had as a boy the privilege of being on speaking terms with a man who applied for the office [of executioner], and who sank into an incurable melancholy because he failed to get it, some slight mitigation of his grief being to dwell upon striking episodes in the lives of those happier ones who had held it with success and renown."

The reader can hardly fail to be impressed with the fact that the escape of the first stranger from the clutches of the law is represented as a satisfactory event. As Hardy puts it in the story, "the sympathy of a great many country-folk in that district was strongly on the side of the fugitive." We cannot know exactly to what extent Hardy himself is in sympathy with the country-folk; but it is certain that in many of his works he has made much of the contrast between the unyielding rigor of law and the severity of organized public opinion

on the one hand, and the tolerance and natural kindliness of his uneducated peasants on the other. The student interested in this aspect of Hardy's work should read the last of the *Wessex Tales*, called "The Distracted Minister," a characteristic and delightfully ironical story in which a minister of the gospel is brought into very sympathetic relations with smugglers of liquor.

**157, 16. Timon:** the misanthropist of Athens. See Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* and Plutarch's life of Mark Antony. It is a characteristic note of Hardy's art, by such light touches as the allusion to Timon and Nebuchadnezzar, to invite the reader to associate the Wessex stories with the oldest pages of human history.

**157, 16. Nebuchadnezzar:** King of Babylon; see *Daniel iv*.

**157, 17. Less repellent tribe . . . who "conceive and meditate of pleasant things."**

Mr. Hardy has not much in common with this "tribe." There is a peculiar originality in his attitude towards external nature. He looks with a kind of somber rejoicing upon the barren and waste places of the earth as in harmony with the somber destiny of men. The fullest and most eloquent expression that he has given to this idea is in the first chapter of his great novel, *The Return of the Native*. In the course of his description there of Egdon Heath he says: "Human souls may find themselves in closer and closer harmony with external things wearing a somberness distasteful to our race when it was young. The time seems near, if it has not actually arrived, when the chastened sublimity of a moor, a sea, or a mountain will be all of nature that is absolutely in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind." Everyone who wishes to know Hardy at his best should read the first chapter, and, indeed the entire book.

**158, 16. Senlac and Crecy.** The last resistance of the English under Harold at the battle of Senlac, 1066, was overcome by a shower of Norman arrows shot into the air and falling on the heads and faces of the foe. In the battle of Crecy, 1346, Edward III won the victory by the skilful employment of his Englishmen with the long-bow against the French cavalry.

**159, 12-13. "Like the laughter of the fool."** "For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool." *Ecclesiastes, vii, 6*.

**159, 21. Pourparlers:** "conferences."

**159, 33. Bonhomie:** "good humor."

**160, 31. Serpent:** a bass wind instrument, formerly used in military bands.

**161, 14. Apogee to perigee:** a continuation of the simile "planet-like courses." Apogee is the point in the moon's orbit which is furthest from the earth; perigee is the point which is nearest to the earth.

**167, 9. Casterbridge.** A map of Mr. Hardy's Wessex may be found in recent editions of most of the novels.

**174, 31. Circulus, cujus centrum diabolus:** "a circle of which the center is the devil."

### ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Robert Louis Stevenson was born on November 13, 1850, in Edinburgh, and there he spent his happy though delicate childhood, and sauntered with observant eyes through the University. He made a bowing acquaintance with his father's profession, civil engineering, and he was admitted to the Scotch bar, but his heart was engaged in authorship from the outset. By the time he was twenty-four he was already a delightful essayist for the *Cornhill Magazine*; his first and perhaps most charming work in this vein is collected in *Virginibus Puerisque*, 1881, and *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, 1882. A consumptive tendency and a taste for travel combined to make him a life-long wanderer in search of health and adventure. Two of his earlier excursions on the Continent he turned to literary account in *An Inland Voyage*, 1878, and *Travels with a Donkey*, 1879—books in which picturesque description is enlivened by high spirits, poetic sentiment, and a light-hearted Bohemian philosophy. In 1879 with very poor health and the slightest visible means of support he made a rather desperate journey to California, and in the following year brought home as his wife an American lady whom he had met some years earlier at an artists' colony in France. In the next seven years, while residing uneasily in the Scotch Highlands, in the Alps, in France, and in England, he produced more essays and a biographical memoir; two volumes of verse—*A Child's Garden of Verses*, 1885, and *Underwoods*, 1887; three volumes of short stories—*New Arabian Nights*, 1882, *More New Arabian Nights*, 1885, and *The Merry Men and Other Tales*, 1886; and four novels and romances—*Treasure Island*, 1882, *Prince Otto*, 1885, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 1886, and *Kidnapped*, 1886. In 1887, still pursuing his fugitive health, he went again to America, where he spent a winter in the Adirondacks working upon a new novel, *The Master of Ballantrae*. In the following year he chartered a small schooner and sailed for a long



cruise in the South Pacific, which ended in his establishing his home in Samoa. Neither voyaging nor supervising his barbarians on the new plantation seems seriously to have interrupted the course of his pen. Into the period following his last departure from America fall *The Black Arrow*, 1888, *The Master of Ballantrae*, 1889, *Island Night's Entertainment*, 1893, *David Balfour*, 1894, other works written in collaboration with his stepson, and poems, travels, essays, and tales, some of which were left fragmentary by his sudden death in December, 1894. (The most important biographical materials are in *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, 2 vols., 1901, and *The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* by Graham Balfour, 2 vols., 1908.)

Stevenson is not only one of the most popular authors but also one of the most fascinating men of his times. The secret of his charm as a man is that he fashioned for himself a singularly distinct and piquant character with a core of Calvinistic conscience, unflinching courage, the vivacity and grace and gayety of a Cavalier, and the minor tastes and the garb of a Bohemian. He was able to reach a great variety of readers because he offered a wide range of attractions. The root of the matter is that he himself was keenly interested in an abundance of vital subjects: in the major passions and morals of men; in the manners of nations, Scotch, English, French and barbarian; in the changing beauty and terror of the face of nature; in poetry, religion, and history; in literature as an extension of personal experience and in literature considered as a fine art. Question has been raised as to whether he understood the feminine nature; but his *Garden of Verses* proves that he knew the mind of a child; his *Treasure Island* is evidence that he had at times the heart of a boy; from his essays it is clear that he was expert in all the hopes and fears and wayward moods of early manhood; *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* shows to the satisfaction of clergymen that he had maturely consulted the bosom of sinful man. Now the versatility of his interests was matched by the versatility of his powers of expression. He spoke to his public through almost every important literary form: a great variety of verse; the drama; the book of travel; the biographical memoir; history; essays in literary criticism, reminiscence, the pleasures of life, and lay morals; fables and short stories of divers lands in many styles; novels and romances, historical, romantic, and allegorical; letters as familiar as talk and as sparkling as dramatic dialogue. He is esteemed by literary craftsmen for the artistic conscientiousness of his work. Briefly speaking, a man with an "artistic conscience" is one who does his work well enough to satisfy everybody else; and then does it

all over again to satisfy himself. Stevenson has been somewhat mistakenly praised by popular moralists as an "optimist"; despite the gayety of his tone, he looked upon life as a mixed and difficult affair, through which one could come creditably only by gritting one's teeth and playing the game like a man. By critics of the recent "realistic" school he is sometimes disparagingly labeled a "Neo-Romantic." If he is to be associated with the Romanticists, one should be careful to distinguish between being romantic with Poe and being romantic with Scott; between the romance of melancholy vision and opium dream, and the romance of history and adventurous living.

### WILL O' THE MILL

"Will o' The Mill" was first published in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1878. The natural setting of the story was, as his biographer tells us, "a combination of the Murgthal in Baden and the Brenner Pass in Tyrol, over which he went on his Grand Tour at the age of twelve." The contemplative life, which Will represents, attracted Stevenson more in his youth than in his maturer years. He declared later that he had written "Will o' The Mill" as a kind of experiment to see how charming he could make a way of living that was almost the opposite of his own. It was in this same year 1878 that he wrote his "Song of the Road," a poem which, while it calls us over the hills and far away, lightly declares that it is not worth while to go anywhere in particular:

For who would gravely set his face  
To go to this or t'other place?  
There's nothing under Heav'n so blue  
That's fairly worth the traveling to.

In his pleasant purposelessness, Will reminds one of the winsome idler in Stevenson's early greenwood romance, *Prince Otto*. In his philosophizing turn, he is just a bit like Thoreau, whom Stevenson, in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, praises for many virtues and censures for the vice of hanging back. "Acts may be forgiven," says the lay moralist, "not even God can forgive the hanger-back." The adventurous spirit of most of his works and of his own life may be suggested by a couple of stanzas from one of the *Songs of Travel*:

The untented Kosmos my abode,  
I pass, a wilful stranger:  
My mistress still the open road  
And the bright eyes of danger.  
Come ill or well, the cross, the crown,  
The rainbow or the thunder,  
I fling my soul and body down  
For God to plough them under.

**The Plain and the Stars.** The "fat young man's" meditations upon Arcturus and Aldebaran and his parable of the "squirrel turning in a cage" may profitably be compared with Carlyle's chapter "Center of Indifference" in *Sartor Resartus*. The following passage will suggest the parallelism:

"*Ach Gott*, when I gazed into these Stars, have they not looked down on me as if with pity, from their serene spaces; like Eyes glistening with heavenly tears over the little lot of man! Thousands of human generations, all as noisy as our own, have been swallowed up of Time, and there remains no wreck of them any more; and Arcturus and Orion and Sirius and the Pleiades are still shining in their courses, clear and young, as when the Shepherd first noted them in the plain of Shinar. Pshaw! what is this paltry little Dog-cage of an Earth; what art thou that sittest whining there?"

#### THE SIRE DE MALÉTROIT'S DOOR

"The Sire de Malétroit's Door," made its first appearance in the January number of *Temple Bar*, 1878, and was included in *New Arabian Nights*, 1882. Mr. Balfour informs us that it was "invented in France, first told over the fire one evening in Paris, and ultimately written in Penzance." At this period of his life Stevenson was frequently in France, and was much interested in French romancers, particularly Hugo and Dumas, and in French poetry, particularly that of the fifteenth century. In 1876 he contributed to the *Cornhill Magazine* his essay on "Charles of Orleans," and in 1877 his essay on "Francis Villon"—both fifteenth century poets. In 1877 was published also "A Lodging for the Night," a fifteenth century tale with Villon as hero.

**217, 14. The troops of Burgundy and England.** England, then attempting to establish her sovereignty in France, had the Duke of Burgundy for an ally. Denis de Beaulieu was on the side of the

French king, Charles VII, who held his court in Bourges, Denis's native town. Though Denis, for unexplained reasons, was on "safe-conduct," it was obviously hazardous for him to wander after dark through streets where he was liable to meet hostile and drunken soldiers.

**218, 12. Chateau Landon:** a small ancient town, southeast of Paris.

**219, 23. Hotel:** for the French *hôtel*, a mansion.

**223, 6. Bearings:** emblems in a coat of arms.

**223, 31. Leonardo's women.** Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519) was a Florentine of great and manifold talents. His most celebrated female portrait is the Mona Lisa, recently stolen from the Louvre and recovered in Italy. The portrait of Mona Lisa—otherwise known as La Gioconda—is eloquently described by Pater in his chapter on Leonardo in *The Renaissance*.

**225, 8. damoiseau:** a title given to young noblemen, aspirants to knighthood, etc.

### SIR JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE

James Matthew Barrie was born in 1860 in the linen-weaving town called Thrums in his books and Kirriemuir on the maps of Scotland. He attended the Dumfries Academy, and made a beginning in journalism by contributing sporting notes to the local papers. In 1882 he received the Bachelor's degree at the University of Edinburgh with distinction in English literature. In the following year he secured the position of leader writer on the *Nottingham Journal* at three guineas a week. Having a pretty free hand in the editorial room, he quickly developed the power of writing rapidly and well on a great variety of topics. And while he was giving a literary flavor to the *Journal*, he kept one eye upon the metropolis and the London papers. He began to make capital of his life in Thrums with an article entitled "An Auld Licht Community," which was published in the *St. James Gazette* in 1884. In 1885 he established himself in London, and was soon a prolific contributor to various periodicals. His works fall into three divisions corresponding roughly to the stages of his literary career: miscellaneous articles, sketches, and short stories originally published in periodicals; novels; and plays. In 1887 he published a little book called *Better Dead*, which gives a humorous account of a society for putting eminent undesirable citizens out of the world. He made his first collection of Thrums

sketches, *Auld Licht Idyls*, in 1888; to this he added in 1889 *A Window in Thrums*; and in 1890 *My Lady Nicotine*, a collection of bachelor reminiscences and fancies. In 1888 he published *When a Man's Single*, an imperfect but very jolly novel based upon his journalistic experiences in Nottingham and London. In 1891 appeared the more celebrated *Little Minister*; in 1896, *Sentimental Tommy* and *Margaret Ogilvy*; in 1900, *Tommy and Grizel*. In his later period Barrie turned to the drama and freshened it with his dainty sentiment, whimsical mirth, and ingenious fancies. Of the dozen or more plays now to his credit may be mentioned: *The Little Minister*, 1897; *Quality Street*, 1903; *Peter Pan*, 1904; *What Every Woman Knows*, 1908.

There is a rather fascinating young journalist in *When a Man's Single* who sees "copy" in his own love story: "My God," groans Dick Abinger, "I would write an article, I think, on my mother's coffin." Barrie is very like Dick Abinger. He has the observant eye of a journalist, quick sympathies, a quizzical humor, sentiment, and piquant, unconventional speech; and he is attended always by a kind of elvish secondary personality, engaged in writing his autobiography. He served up the memories of his Scotch boyhood in *Auld Licht Idyls*, *A Window in Thrums*, and *The Little Minister*; and, to use the slang phrase, he put the little town permanently "on the map" of literature, with its savory dialect and quaint idioms, its bannocks and scones, its odd characters, its queer courtships and little tragedies, and its endless religious bickerings. The most interesting man that Barrie has put into fiction is himself—the eternally-young man of artistic temperament, constantly falling in love, yet a bachelor at heart. In *When a Man's Single* he cuts himself in two, and gives his Nottingham newspaper experience to Rob Angus and his earlier London career to Dick Abinger. In *Sentimental Tommy* he turns his artistic temperament inside out. In *Margaret Ogilvy* he draws upon his fond recollections of his mother and her relations with him. In *Tommy and Grizel* he has a laugh at his own sentimentality and hangs himself—so to speak, in effigy. When Barrie had made his mark in the novel, he turned to the drama, which needed him badly, and delighted his audiences with original medleys of quivering sentiment and rippling laughter. His passage from fugitive sketch to short story, from short story to novel, from novel to fairy play has been singularly facile and light-footed. He gives the impression of one "tripping the light fantastic." Stevenson said of him, years ago, that he had genius but had always a journalist at his elbow. The but-clause marks an

important difference between him and his fellow-Scot. When Stevenson sat down to write, his mind never wandered to morning papers or to handkerchiefs waving in the galleries.

### THE COURTING OF T'NOWHEAD'S BELL"

"The Courting of T'nowhead's Bell" constitutes Chapter VIII in *Auld Licht Idyls*, 1888. The book as a whole is a full and delightful commentary upon the customs, manners, and characters of an Auld Licht community. Those who are dissatisfied with Bell for letting Sam'l off so easily should read as a sequel Barrie's fine short story, "How Gavin Birse Put it to Mag Lownie."

**242, 3. Thrums.** Barrie's name in fiction for Kirriemuir, his birth-place in Forfarshire, Scotland—a town with a population in 1901 of 4096.

**242, 12. The kirk.** The Auld Licht kirk was a very strait-laced denomination founded in 1806. Chapter III of *Auld Licht Idyls* discusses the church and its members and also the intense inter-denominational jealousies and hatreds of the town.

**242, 17-18. Lang Tammas' circle.** Lang Tammas was precentor of the kirk and his circle was strictly religious; for further details see Chapter III of *Auld Licht Idyls*.

**243, 11. The square:** the central foregathering place in Thrums.

**249, 10. Rob Angus:** the hero of Barrie's *When a Man's Single*.

**252, 24-25. Muckle Friday.** A passage in the second chapter of *Auld Licht Idyls*, explains "Muckle Friday" and also illustrates the great scarcity of money in the community—a point of significance in connection with the "extravegint" gift of Sam'l: "On the Muckle Friday, the fair for which children storing their pocket-money would accumulate sevenpence halfpenny in less than six months, the square was crammed with gingerbread stalls, bag-pipers, fiddlers, and monstrosities who were gifted with second-sight."

**254, 18-19. Fortunately he did not meet the minister.** The terror in which the minister was held is illustrated by the reference to "Joey Sutie, who was pointed at in Thrums as the laddie that whistled when he went past the minister. Joey became a pedler, and was found dead one raw morning dangling over a high wall within a few miles of Thrums. When climbing the dyke his pack had slipped back, the strap round his neck, and choked him." Second chapter of *Auld Licht Idyls*. Barrie utilized this incident later in his novel, *Tommy and Grizel*.

260, 14. U. P. kirk: United Presbyterian Church.

262, 7. Penny wedding. "Perhaps the penny extra to the fiddler accounts for the name penny wedding. The ceremony having been gone through in the bride's house, there was an adjournment to a barn or other convenient place of meeting, where was held the nuptial feast." *Auld Licht Idyls*, Ch. IV.

### O. HENRY

O. Henry, whose real name was William Sidney Porter, was born in 1862 in Greenboro, North Carolina, where he received his education, and clerked in his uncle's drug store. According to a testimonial of 1884, he was a young man of good moral character, and "a No one druggist," and very popular among his many friends. He went to Texas, and in 1884 wrote home from a ranch in La Salle County: "If long hair, part of a sombrero, Mexican spurs, &c., would make a fellow famous, I already occupy a topmost niche in the Temple Frame." In this same youthful and effervescent letter appear already the marks of O. Henry's vivid, slangy, humorous style: "I have almost forgotten what a regular old, gum-chewing, ice-cream destroying, opera-ticket vortex, ivory-clawing girl looks like." After some years of ranching and clerking in an Austin bank, O. Henry attempted to run a humorous weekly story-paper which he christened *The Rolling Stone*, and, mainly by his own hand, kept alive in Austin for a part of 1894 and 1895. The venture was unsuccessful; and the editor began to roll—reporting for a while on the *Houston Post*, visiting Central America, fruitlessly experimenting with banana culture, and apparently clerking again in a drug store. In the course of these imperfectly recorded meanderings he accumulated his literary moss, and at length settled down in New Orleans to become an author. He made no great impression upon the public, however, till 1901, when he went to New York and besieged the magazine editors. He then swiftly became one of the most popular short-story writers in America, and was in the full tide of production at the time of his death in 1910. His collections of stories were published as follows: *Cabbages and Kings*, 1905; *The Four Million*, 1906; *The Trimmed Lamp*, 1907; *The Gentle Grafter*, 1908; *Options*, 1909; *Roads of Destiny*, 1909; *Strictly Business*, 1910; *Whirligigs*, 1910; *Sixes and Sevens*, 1911. *Rolling Stones*, 1912, contains, in addition to a number of stories, a considerable amount of biographical matter—photographs, letters, drawings by O. Henry, and reproductions of pages of the original *Rolling Stone*.

O. Henry, like the earlier Kipling, departs sharply from the beaten paths of fiction and strikes into new and unregarded fields. He has seen what the tramp sees, and the itinerant swindler, the commercial traveler, the newspaper reporter. He is perhaps the greatest of short-story writers in the picaresque manner. He does not go far beneath the rank surface of his territory, but goes wide over it with a devouring eye; he has the "All-American" outlook of universal rascaldom. He has made a great harvest of the sounds and sights and smells of New York City in chop house, saloon, "lobster-palace," flat, tenement, park, police court, Broadway, Coney Island. He knows, too, the roads and railways branching into the South and stretching across the West; the various features and characters of towns and cities from Chicago down the Mississippi Valley to New Orleans and out to 'Frisco; the ranchers and miners and the picturesque riff-raff of adventurers floating through Arizona, Texas, Mexico, and South America, and the returned wanderer from the Philippines. Though his individual characters are for the most part not memorable, they exhibit in the mass a great deal of "human nature"; he has not dealt much with the exceptional passions which raise a few men above the crowd, but he has sharply indicated the common tone and garb and gesture of an entire stratum of society. His plots are very craftily premeditated, and are notable for terminal surprises, which, like an electric button, suddenly flash an unexpected illumination from end to end of the story. His surprises, furthermore, are not generally dependent upon arbitrary arrangements of external circumstances but upon plausible shifts and twists in the feelings and ideas of the human agents. His style is an original creation: intensely contemporaneous; inelegant and slangy but, in its way, immensely learned; startling with Pickwickian paraphrase and grotesque examples of the *mot précis*; "rich beyond the dreams of average—rich as Greasers" with malapropisms and allusions to Walt Whittier, Albert Tennyson, and contemporary celebrities of less durable reputations; stuffed with puns, good and bad,—a kind of spicy, fruity cake, in short, into which one bites in constant expectation of striking a vernacular coin fresh from the mint.

## PHŒBE

Phœbe was included in the volume, *Roads of Destiny*, 1909. In its comic treatment of Central American politics it is to be associated with O. Henry's first volume of stories, *Cabbages and Kings*, 1905.



**266, 17. Wedding-guest:** an allusion to Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner":

The Wedding-Guest stood still,  
And listens like a three years' child:  
The Mariner hath his will.

**266, 24. Charm against evil.** O. Henry's reason for mentioning this charm appears in the last sentence of the story.

**270, 16. No solider of body than split-pea soup.** The density of Saturn is 0.13 that of the earth—considerably *less* than that of "split-pea soup."

**270, 27. Izard.** The old name of the letter Z.

**271, 8. That's Phœbe.** Phœbe, the ninth satellite of Saturn, was discovered in 1898 by W. H. Pickering in photographs of the sky near Saturn, which were taken at the branch Harvard observatory at Arequipa, Peru.

**273, 1. Compadre mio:** "my friend."

**273, 6. Capitán:** "captain."

**273, 9. Valgame Dios:** "good lord."

**276, 2. Balmaceda.** José Manuel Balmaceda was elected president of Chile in 1886. His attempt to collect taxes without convoking the assembly led to the Chilean Civil War of 1891. He was defeated, and committed suicide in September of that year.

**277, 30-31. En la causa de la libertad:** "in the cause of liberty."

**278, 20. Mala suerte:** "bad luck—the deuce."

**279, 9. Companero:** "comrade."

**279, 16. Adios:** "good-by."

**282, 32. Residencia:** "mansion."

**283, 9. Carne:** "meat."

**283, 10. Cantinas:** "shops."

**283, 29. Mozo:** "man-servant."

## RUDYARD KIPLING

Rudyard Kipling was born on December 30, 1865, in Bombay, India, where his father was architectural sculptor in the Bombay School of Art. He was educated at the United Services College in Devonshire, England, and has given some account of his school life in *Stalky and Co.* Returning to India, he became in 1882 assistant-editor of the *Lahore Civil and Military Gazette*, to which he contributed many of his earlier tales. By the time he was twenty-four the young—

not to say juvenile—editor had published a volume of verse—*Departmental Ditties*—and *Plain Tales from the Hills*, *Soldiers Three*, *The Story of the Gadsbys*, *In Black and White*, *Under the Deodars*, *The Phantom 'Rickshaw*, and *Wee Willie Winkie*. Between his twenty-second and twenty-fourth years he travelled extensively in India, China, Japan, and America, sent his impressions of travel to his Indian newspapers, and later collected them in two volumes, *From Sea to Sea*, 1899. In 1891 he published another collection of Indian Tales, *Life's Handicap*, and his first novel, *The Light that Failed*; in the same year he wrote in conjunction with Wolcott Balestier *The Naulahka*. In 1892 he married Balestier's sister, an American, and for some years made one of his homes in Brattleboro, Vermont. The most notable American fruit of his American sojourn was his tale of the Gloucester fishermen, *Captains Courageous*, 1897. But before he made his permanent residence in England he published the *Barrack-Room Ballads*, 1892, *Many Inventions*, 1893, the two *Jungle Books*, 1894 and 1895, an important volume of verse—*The Seven Seas*, 1896, and *The Day's Work*, 1898, a collection of short stories containing some remarkable mechanical fantasies. In 1898 he visited South Africa, then on the eve of conflict with Great Britain, and became an ardent and influential advocate of annexation. His chief later publications are: *Stalky and Co.*, 1899; *Kim*, 1901; *Just So Stories*, 1902; *The Five Nations*, 1903; *Traffics and Discoveries*, 1904; *Puck of Pook's Hill*, 1906; *Actions and Reactions*, 1909; *Rewards and Fairies*, 1910. (See G. F. Monkshood's *Rudyard Kipling*, 1899, and Richard Le Gallienne's *Rudyard Kipling*, 1900; the latter contains a bibliography by John Lane.)

Mr. Kipling began by telling his spicy tales to his own "parish" of Lahore, but in an amazingly short time he had the attention of the whole world, for it became evident that he was making a Jameson raid and annexing new provinces to the imperial realm of English fiction. To readers yawning over the early Victorian novelists or growing blue over recent French and Russian realism, he sent his short stories like a triumphal procession with a flash and clatter of cavalry, Tommy Atkins bronzed by tropical suns and rich with strange trophies in red coat and khaki rhythmically marching, red-mouthed kings of the jungle, a bristling of wild spearmen, the thunder of ordnance, the pomp of turbaned rajahs, and the trumpeting of elephants. Readers are exhilarated by violent contrasts, and Kipling readily turned his public from a Rossetti sonnet to a barrack-room ballad, from a 500-page "slumming" novel to a ten-page tragedy

"east of Suez," from the gossip of a five-o'clock tea to a head-hunt in the Punjab. Nor was it merely the stuff of his fiction which made the novel appeal. He slammed the door on old romance—"the loves and doves they dream,"—and brought out and glorified the hard, firm-mouthed, sinful "man that does things"—the bridger of the Ganges, the queller of native insurrections, the civilian governor of famine-and-fever-stricken districts. A disciple of Carlyle in his ethical system, he did a good deal of effective preaching, and the burden of his message was that man, machinery, and the very beasts of the jungle are in desperate need of law, order, discipline, and subordination. And, finally, his style was as original as his matter and his doctrine. In his earlier stories especially he broke from the decorous tradition of great English writers. He adopted a journalistic manner, crisp, racy, slangy, cynical, verging upon the brutally curt. In concocting his tales he aimed to hit robust masculine tastes, to speak with a tang to men in smoking rooms, and trains and barracks. But he made them so brilliant with Oriental color, so intense and arresting in their energy, wonder, terror, and splendor that he fascinated not merely the miscellaneous reading multitudes but also the hardened critics and the fastidious literary men like R. L. Stevenson and Mr. Henry James, who dropped their pens, and pricked up their ears, and cried out to one another that in the smoking-room there was a great artist.

#### THE MAN WHO WAS

**286, 4. Treated as the most easterly of Western peoples.** In his well-known poem, "The Ballad of East and West," Kipling cries:

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,  
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat."

Not long before "The Man Who Was" was written, Russia was apparently contemplating pushing her frontier southward into Afghanistan, and so drawing nearer to the British frontier in the Punjab. Dirkovitch is represented as seeking to gain the assent and good will of the English with regard to this southward advance. Kipling's story seems designed to repel the Russian friendship, and to reawaken memories of the deadly hostility formerly existing between the two peoples. In 1885 a Russian attack upon the northern border of Afghanistan produced critical relations with Great Britain; but the difficulties were settled by the delimitation of the frontier in 1887.

For this amicable settlement Lord Dufferin, then viceroy of India, was chiefly responsible. In "One Viceroy Resigns," Kipling tells us how Lord Dufferin handled the Russians:

"I told the Russian that his Tartar veins  
Bled pure Parisian ichor; and he purred."

In 1898 Nicholas II. of Russia issued his memorable invitation to the powers to hold a conference in the interests of international peace. Mr. Kipling promptly responded to this overture with "The Truce of the Bear," a poem in which he warns his countrymen that there is no peace with "the bear that looks like a man." Those who are seeking to bring the nations of the world into fraternal relations do not generally look upon Mr. Kipling as an ally.

**286, 22. Peshawur.** A city with a population in 1901 of 95,147, capital of the North-West Frontier Province. Peshawur lies at the mouth of the Khyber Pass,—which is the most important gateway between India and Afghanistan,—and is consequently the most important military station of the province.

**287, 19-20. Upper Burmah . . . Irrawaddy.** When the story was written, the reference to the soldiers "dying in the teak forests of Upper Burmah" had the interest of an almost contemporary event. The Burmese War, in which the British marched to Mandalay and deposed King Thibaw, began in 1885; and Upper Burmah was annexed on January 1, 1886. The Irrawaddy is the principal river in the province.

**288, 16. Sotnia of Cossacks:** a cavalry squadron. The Cossacks are a considerable portion of the Russian population, established in various frontier districts, and accorded certain privileges, in return for which each man is bound to perform military service from the age of 18 to 38.

**289, 14. Pathan:** a name applied to the warlike Afghan tribes of the border.

**291, 3. Sambhur, nilghai:** deer, antelope.

**293, 14. "Reached back" after the American fashion:** as if for a revolver in the hip-pocket or holster.

**299, 17. Only one weapon in the world:** the knout, formerly used freely in Russia for punishing criminals and political offenders.

**300, 27. The country:** Siberia.

**300, 28-30. Chepany . . . Zhigansk and Irkutsk:** towns of Siberia. Irkutsk is within the Arctic Circle.

**301, 9. That was before Sebastopol.** The Crimean War, 1853-1856, centered about the siege of Sebastopol, which began in 1854. This war had its significant origin in Russian aggressions upon Turkey. Confident that the Turkish empire was going to pieces, the Czar had endeavored to persuade England to unite with him in sharing the spoils. But England and France, preferring to maintain Turkey as a buffer between Russia and western Europe, went to the aid of the Sultan. Kipling was evidently impressed by the parallelism of the crisis of 1885, and by the importance of maintaining Afghanistan as a buffer between Russia and India.

**301, 11. Thirty years of his life wiped out.** Thirty added to 1854 gives 1884 as approximately the date of the events related in the story.

## QUESTIONS

### I

#### RIP VAN WINKLE

I. How many pages are given to the preliminary description of Rip's character and pursuits? How does Irving illustrate the statement that "Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own"? What light does Wolf throw upon the temper of Rip's wife? By what touches does Irving suggest the backward and drowsy spirit of the village? Is Rip a fit person to be the sport of supernatural powers?

II. At exactly what point does the narrative proper begin? Could it be detached without serious loss from the "preliminary description"? From what did Rip escape when he went hunting? What is the time of day, and what is Rip doing at the moment when the distant voice calls out his name? Describe the costume of the old fellow with the keg on his shoulder. Of what nation and of what historical period are the players at nine-pins? Is there anything later in the story to indicate that Irving has united a legend concerning a supernaturally long sleep in the mountains with an older legend concerning the strange revels of "Hendrick" Hudson and the crew of the Half-Moon? What is the explanation of the length of Rip's slumber?

III. What proportion of the entire story is occupied with events subsequent to Rip's awaking? Is he aware, when he wakes, of the long flight of time? What has remained essentially unchanged while he was changing? Do the twittering birds and pure mountain breeze deepen your interest in his discovery of the decaying firelock? Are the incidents illustrating the lapse of twenty years arranged in climactic order? Describe the alterations in: (a) Rip, his belongings, and his family; (b) the inhabitants, the houses, and the general tone of the village; (c) the politics and government of the country. Does Irving present these alterations directly to the reader or indirectly through the eyes of Rip? Has society suffered by Rip's absence?

IV. What phrases, incidents, and characters—aside from the hero—appeal to your sense of humor? Is the passage in which Rip consoles

his dog humorous or pathetic? Can you find an incident that is purely pathetic? What appeal is made to the sense of beauty? How much space is given to the description of landscape? Is the style easy or labored, simple and unadorned, or complex and ornate? Can you perceive any resemblance between Irving's manner and that of Addison in the *Spectator*? Would the creator of Sir Roger de Coverley have enjoyed Rip?

V. Did Irving expect his readers to accept the events of this tale as matters of fact? If not, why does he prefix the poetical quotation from Cartwright? Does he consider Diedrich Knickerbocker a trustworthy historian? What does he mean when he says that "legendary lore" is "invaluable to true history"? (Have you read the *Knickerbocker's History of New York*?) If you were sailing up the Hudson or wandering in the Catskills, would it contribute anything to your pleasure in purple mountain and majestic river to be able to repeople them, as Irving did, with their former generations—Revolutionary parties, early Dutch voyagers and settlers, and red-skinned aborigines? If the reading of "Rip Van Winkle" has quickened your interest in these things, why not read or re-read the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow"?

## II

### THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL

1. What indications are given of the place and historical period of the story? What part of it is occupied with the events of a single day?

2. To what denomination does the minister belong? Are there any indications of the form of church government? Would such an act as his appear more or less remarkable in another sort of religious community?

3. On how many distinctly specified occasions does the minister appear in his black veil? Can you distinguish the nature of the impression made by him on each of these occasions?

4. Why does Hawthorne call the story a parable? Does it teach a lesson which can be put to practical uses? What does the assumption of the veil imply with regard to the minister's own character? Does remembering one's evil deeds assist one in the path of virtue? What do you think of the value of public penance?

5. Outline a short story or parable in the manner of Hawthorne dealing with a man whose eyes mysteriously and involuntarily reflect visible images of the acts upon which he broods in his heart.

## III

## ETHAN BRAND

1. Notice that this story rigorously observes the "unities" of time, place, and action. What are the limits of the time indicated? What is the extent of the scene described? Sum up the action in a single sentence. Notice that the narrative begins abruptly with a solemn laugh, runs on in the dialogue of the lime-burner and his son for four short paragraphs, then pauses for a descriptive passage of some length and for a few hints as to the life of Brand previous to the opening of the story. What advantage did Hawthorne gain by introducing the mirthless laugh before the description and explanation?

2. How does the laugh affect Bartram? How does it affect the boy? How do you account for the different effects upon father and son? Does the boy give any other evidence of spiritual sensitiveness later in the story?

3. Is the character of Brand explained mainly by his actions or by his author? Why does he laugh? What was his "unpardonable sin"? What virtues have the stage-agent, Lawyer Giles, and the village doctor which he has not? What do you think that Brand saw in the diorama of the German Jew? What analogy did Brand perceive between his own case and that of the dog in pursuit of its tail? Is there any intimation that the strange behavior of the dog is due to diabolical influence?

4. What is the flaming mouth of the lime-kiln intended to suggest? Can you find any other instances of symbolical suggestion? Is the preservation of Brand's heart after the consumption of his body an example?

5. Is there anything pleasurable in the scene, the incidents, or the characters of this story? Does it leave you in cheerful mood? Does it make you reflect? Have you ever heard of the "New England conscience"? Is the moral conveyed in this story a wholesome one? Is the sin of Ethan Brand very prevalent in your neighborhood?

## IV

## THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

1. Poe has an astonishing command of the resources of emotional suggestion. Before admitting us to the interior of the House of Usher, he deliberately seeks to produce in us an overwhelming sense of deso-



lation, decay, and mysterious sorrow. Make a list of the depressing adjectives and images in the first paragraph. What part of the effect of this paragraph upon you is due to the actual description of the house and its surroundings? What part is due to the narrator's account of the state of his own nerves and his melancholy fancies? Should you expect a more cheerful impression of the house to result from seeing its inverted reflection in the black tarn? Why does Poe repeat the phrase, "the vacant and eye-like windows"? Tell in a single brief sentence what is accomplished by each of the first seven paragraphs. Is the writer himself morbid?

2. In what sentence does Poe summarize the effect of the various details of Usher's studio? What strokes in the description of this room continue the suggestion of mystery? What epithets applied to the valet and the physician are calculated to make one uneasy? Is the description of Usher's personal appearance intended to be repellent? By what symptoms are his extreme nervousness and sensitiveness emphasized? How is the feeling of suspense aroused in the account of Usher's fear? Do you know *what* he fears? Why does not Usher introduce his visitor to Madeline? If Poe had named the lady Mary, how would it have affected your feelings with regard to her?

3. A series of paragraphs following the description of the sister's malady sets forth the various talents of Usher. What in general is the function of these paragraphs? Do they heighten your interest in Usher? Do they render him more or less attractive? More or less mysterious? Does Usher's painting of the tunnel mean anything to you? Is the ballad an allegory? What is the general character of Usher's favorite books? Is his reading adapted to correct the dreamy vagueness of his feelings and ideas? Would Usher have enjoyed the works of Mark Twain?

4. From the time of the entombment of Madeline to the end of the story there is a rapid accumulation of terrors. Why does Poe speak of the lady's "suspiciously lingering smile" after death? What change in Usher increases the mental tension? Can you give any natural account of the midnight apprehensions of the visitor? What was there "wildly singular" in the tempest? Note the appropriateness to the situation of the "Mad Trist"; how do the passages read from this work contribute to the horror of the hour? Does the story end at the moment of intensest interest? Does the fall of the house give artistic value to Usher's views on the sentience of inanimate things?

5. To what extent is the story carried on by means of dialogue?

Is there any passage that seems redundant—that does not contribute perceptibly to the total effect? How does the style compare in simplicity with that of *Rip Van Winkle*? Do you notice any passages of marked rhythmical power? How does this story compare in “objectivity” with Irving’s tale? Does it arouse your interest in any particular locality or any period of history? Has it any moral significance? Does it give you pleasure? Does it impress you, on the whole, as beautiful? If so, can you say why?

## V

## THE GOLD-BUG

1. If this story were divided into three parts or chapters, where would the divisions fall? Has Poe clearly indicated the first division? If the story had been terminated at the end of the second part, would it have seemed complete? Does your mind carry the questions raised by the first part over the second part into the third? Does Poe direct our attention in the third part to his preconsideration of the smallest details of the first part?

2. By what details does Poe produce the “local color” of Sullivan’s Island? Does the locality seem a promising one for seekers of buried treasure? Is there any hint of a hunt for gold at the narrator’s first visit? Is Legrand an interesting, unusual, mysterious character? Is his mind really deranged? What is Poe’s motive in keeping the suggestion before us that he is mentally unbalanced? Explain the author’s reason for emphasizing Legrand’s scientific interests. Read again the first twenty paragraphs, and make a list of the points about which your curiosity has been roused.

3. What explanation does the narrator give to account for his readiness to accompany Legrand on a nocturnal expedition of which the object is unknown to him? What is Poe’s artistic motive in concealing the object of the expedition from the narrator and from us? Study the means by which Jupiter’s climbing of the tulip-tree is made an incident of breathless interest. Why does not Legrand tell his servant what to look for on the seventh limb? What is the artistic motive for making Jupiter err in the eye of the skull? To prolong the story? To increase the suspense? To bring out the elaborate nicety of the directions for finding the treasure? What is suggested by the statement that there was no American money in the chest? Does the description of the various items of the treasure stimulate your imagination?

4. How does the nature of the interest in the third division of the story differ from that in the second? Does the third part hold your attention more or less closely than the second? Does it throw a new light upon the character of Legrand? Make a list of the mysteries and problems that he solves. How many of them were present in your mind at the end of the first part of the story? At what point does Legrand exhibit the greatest ingenuity and insight? Is Jupiter an ornamental or a necessary character?

5. Compare this story with "The Fall of the House of Usher." Is there any internal evidence that the two stories were written by the same author? In which is the setting more important? In which, the events? In which, the characters? Is there strong passion present in both? Do both play upon your emotions? What emotions, in each case? Which makes the greater demands upon the reader's intelligence? In which does the style seem most carefully wrought? Which leaves most to the imagination of the reader? Are both romantic? Does either story contain any moral burden or make any memorable comment upon life?

## VI

### THE SIGNAL-MAN

1. Dickens here discards the traditional apparatus of the teller of short stories—the haunted chamber, the rustling curtains, the obscure light of a clouded moon, the midnight apparitions. Enumerate the modern inventions mentioned and other circumstances presumably unfavorable to the appearance of spirits. Is the narrator a credulous person? How does the signal-man dispose of the suggestion that the occurrence of the "memorable accident" immediately following the apparition was a coincidence? Why does the narrator urge the signal-man to see a physician? Is the narrator convinced in the end of the reality of the vision?

2. The story opens with the shout, "Halloa! Below there!" Why, on hearing this, does the signal-man look down the line? Why is he reluctant to show the narrator the path leading into the cut? Why does he warn his visitor not to call out when he comes and goes? What is the effect upon the reader of Dickens's remark that the signal-man "turned his face towards the little bell when it did NOT ring"? Why does the apparition preceding the death of the lady take a different form from that which it took preceding the other two accidents?

At just what point in the story is the highest excitement reached? Where does the final suspense end?

3. Do you feel well acquainted with the character of any one of the persons introduced in this story? Can you visualize any one of them? Compare the amount of pure description in the "Signal-Man" with that in Hawthorne's "Ethan Brand." Has the story any historical background? Does it enrich your imagination? Has it beauty, humor, pathos, poetic charm? Compare the proportion of dialogue in it with that in the "Fall of the House of Usher." Is the language rhythmical, decorated, suggestive, or simple, direct, colloquial, plain? Does the story carry you out of your ordinary self? Is it ingeniously contrived? Is it sufficiently credible to pass as a bit of the unsolved mystery of the modern, matter-of-fact-world?

## VII

### THE LADY, OR THE TIGER?

1. Why are not the time and place of this story more definitely indicated?

2. What is Stockton's purpose in making his analysis of the character of the king? Does he, in the first paragraph, call attention to any trait which is not illustrated by the events of the story?

3. Is any part of the story conveyed in dialogue? Do you find any point at which dialogue could be advantageously introduced? What is the nature of the humor in passages like the following?—

"Nothing pleased him so much as to make the crooked straight, and crush down uneven places."

"By exhibitions of manly and beastly valor, the minds of his subjects were refined and cultured."

"This was the King's semi-barbaric method of administering justice. Its perfect fairness was obvious."

4. Why does Stockton describe in full the operation of the King's justice before he comes to the case of the young man in love with the princess? Sum up all the reasons for believing that the princess pointed to the door of the lady, and then the reasons for believing that she indicated the door of the tiger. Is the case equally strong for both suppositions? Do some of the reasons "work both ways"?

5. How would it have affected the story, if Stockton had answered the question which he leaves to you? Does the story lend itself to allegorical interpretation? Is it, taken literally, probable? Is its

popularity due to the presence in it of any permanent and general "human interest"? Is your own theory regarding the conduct of the princess based upon the assumption that she is a barbarian or upon the assumption that she is like young women of your own acquaintance? Have you ever been compelled to make a decision between a "lady" and a "tiger," with no other guide than "impartial and incorruptible chance"?

## VIII

### THE THREE STRANGERS

1. The first division of this story extends to the point at which the first stranger ascends the hill. Notice carefully the order in which the stage, setting, and subordinate characters are constructed: the broad aspect of the country; the cottage placed on the down; specification of season, hour, weather; rainy exterior of the house; the general festive aspect of the interior; the company as a whole; Shepherd Fennel and his wife; Oliver Giles and the dancers. What bearing upon subsequent events have these facts: that the house is placed near the crossing of two footpaths on a lonely and unsheltered hill; that the house is "five miles" from town; that the storm is heavy; that the particular event which has called these rural people together is a christening?

2. From what point of view does Hardy describe the approach of the first stranger? Why does he not tell us at once who he is? By what successive strokes does he deepen our suspicion that there is something wrong with the man, before he knocks at the door? What is the significance of the fact that the stranger has lost his pipe and his tobacco box? Why does he set to stirring the fire when he hears a knock at the door?

3. How are the approach, appearance, and conduct of the second stranger contrasted with those of the first? Does he at any time behave like a man who fears detection? What attitude towards him does the first stranger take? Does he overdo his assurance to the extent of rousing your distrust? Does the second stranger's fondness for liquor serve merely to characterize him, or has it some value in the unfolding of the plot?

4. Notice the quickening of the narrative pace from the time when the third stranger appears. Have you any inkling, till the final disclosure, of his relationship to the man in the corner? Do the

humorous stupidity and ignorance of the constable lessen or intensify the seriousness of the man-hunt? How has Hardy prepared us to rejoice at the escape of the first stranger? Why is it—technically—necessary that the third stranger be caught?

5. Is it possible to summarize this story in a sentence of moderate length? Can you say whether characters or whether situations and events are here regarded as of primary importance? Of how many persons do you retain distinct impressions? Does the author betray sympathy with his creatures? Does he show intimate familiarity with scenes of rural life and comprehensions of the minds of rustics? Does the story cast any reflections upon society? Is its undertone comic? tragic? ironic? Has Hardy's art anything in common with that of Irving or Poe?

## IX

### WILL O' THE MILL

1. Can you say at what time or in what country Will o' the Mill lived? Are such facts of any particular importance in a story of this sort? Is Will a highly differentiated individual? What type of life does he represent? Have you known men of his temperament? Have you ever felt anything of his disposition in yourself? Is he presented as a man to be imitated and admired, or to be pitied?

2. Mention all the important events related in the first division of the story? What stimulated Will's desire to see the great world? Did he expect to find riches or happiness in it? Exactly what sort of satisfaction did he hope to obtain by leaving the "fading valley"? Why does Stevenson represent Will's decisive counsellor as a "fat young man"? What is the difference between the temper of the fat young man and Will's?

3. Is Will's courtship to be taken as a pleasant interlude in an otherwise dull life? What was there in Will to attract a girl like Marjory? How does Will's regard for her affect his emotions? Is his attitude towards her reverent, idolatrous, complimentary? Is he really in love with her? What do you think of him when he says, "I do not wish to be held as committing myself"? What is the analogy between his attitude towards marriage and his attitude towards picking flowers? Why does Marjory lie to her father concerning the reasons why she and Will are to break off their engagement? What does Stevenson mean when he says that there were many things about this girl which were beyond Will's comprehension?

4. Is Will's later life embittered by Marjory's marriage? What satisfactions does he find in his maturity and old age? Is he a useful or amiable member of his community? Is his death a sad note in the story? If not, why?

5. What unifies the three divisions of the story? Is the interest intenser as you proceed? Is there mystery or suspense at any point? Could you hold a child's attention by telling him the plot? Has the reading left in your memory any distinct images of persons or scenes? What passages pleased you most? Is the style always clear? fluent? natural?

## X

### THE SIRE DE MALÉTROIT'S DOOR

1. Does Stevenson spend an unnecessarily long time in bringing Denis into the presence of the Sire de Malétroit? For what purpose does he describe the darkness of the night and the intricacy of the lanes of Chateau Landon? Why does he go so much into detail in describing the house which Denis is about to enter? Has the pursuit of the armed men any artistic value, except as it serves as a motive for Denis's retreat to the porch? What descriptive passages and what incidents after his entrance contribute to the historical "color" of the story?

2. What conception of the character of the Sire de Malétroit is conveyed by the description of his physical appearance as he sits "on a high chair beside the chimney"? Notice the details of this word portrait; could a painter reproduce it? What details of the old man's conduct convince Denis that he has to do with a lunatic? With your knowledge of the situation, should you say that his behavior is natural and in character?

3. What passes between Denis and Blanche the first time that they are left alone? What is his mood and what hers in this interview? Is there any indication that either is inclined at all to the other? Are the scene, the attitudes, the actions, and the dialogue such as could be represented on a stage? Is any important development of the relation between Denis and Blanche conveyed in the words of the author as distinguished from the speeches of his characters?

4. Trace carefully the changes in Denis and Blanche from the time when the Sire de Malétroit sends them back, to the end of the story. Why does Denis refuse her first proffer of marriage? What precisely is the cause of Blanche's weeping at this point? Has his attitude

towards her altered when he asks her to refrain from sobbing? What is the effect of his speech on death upon the girl? Does he pity himself as he makes it? What is her master stroke in winning him? Why does Stevenson introduce the intimation of dawn before Denis declares his love? Has satisfactory disposition been made of Florimond de Champdivers?

5. Is there novelty in the characters of any of the persons in this story? Are they conventional figures of romance? Do you feel concerned at any moment for the outcome of the plot? Does any passage excite strong emotion? Is fifteenth century France a fresh field for English fiction? Is this story related in a significant way to the history of the times?

## XI

### THE COURTING OF T'NOWHEAD'S BELL

1. The portion of the story up to the point where Sam'l knocks at T'nowhead's door may be regarded as introductory. Is the conduct of the lovers represented as peculiar to themselves or as the common behavior of young men of Thrums in similar circumstances? What details illustrate the gossiping habits of the community? How is the religious atmosphere of the town emphasized? What incidents illustrate the inexpressiveness and slow wits of the inhabitants? What characteristics of Sam'l appear in his conversation with Eppie Fergus? With Henders? With the idlers beneath the town-clock? Do these conversations bear directly upon the business of the story—the courting?

2. What is Barrie's motive in making T'nowhead favor Sanders and T'nowhead's wife favor Sam'l? How does Sam'l display the politeness which he is alleged to possess? How does T'nowhead show his liking for Sanders? What progress is made in the courtship at the first visit? Why does not Barrie report the conversation that passed between Sam'l and Bell over the potatoes?

3. What are we to infer as to the character of the courtship during the month that elapses between the first visit and the "crisis"? In the escape from the kirk which of the lovers is the more ridiculous? In their race for a wife which seems inspired rather by jealousy than by love? How do the members of the congregation contribute to the interest and humor of the occasion? What is the first indication that Bell favors Sanders? What is the significance of Sanders's remarks while he is poking the pig?



4. At what point does Sam'l begin to waver in his desire to marry Bell? Make a summary of the various motives which influence him in turning her over to his friend. Has adequate preparation been made for Bell's acquiescence in the transfer?

5. Does the dialect detract from or contribute to the pleasure of the story? Test your opinion on this matter by turning a page or two of the dialogue into standard English. Can you say whether the primary interest in this story is in the "local color," the plot, or the characters? Explain the humor of the following passages: (a) "It was Saturday evening—the night in the week when Auld Licht young men fell in love"; (b) "Weel, since ye're sae pressin', I'll bide"; (c) "A body should be mair deeleberate in a thing o' the kind"; (d) "We hae haen deaths in our family too."

## XII

### PHOEBE

1. Do you believe that "there is such a thing as luck"? What is O. Henry's purpose in the first five paragraphs of the story, in which the general problem of luck is raised? Does the author diminish your interest in the fortunes of Kearny by leading you from the outset to expect to see him in an uninterrupted series of accidents? What is the nature of the suspense?

2. What means does O. Henry employ to make the bad luck of Kearny a matter of more than individual concern? What is the artistic function—that is to say, what is the effect upon the reader—of the buoyant optimism of Captain Maloné, Carlos Quintana, and Don Rafael Valdevia as indicated in his letter to Maloné?

3. Why does O. Henry have Maloné dismiss Kearny? How is your attitude towards Kearny affected by his return? When the meteor explodes do you share in the restored confidence of Kearny and Maloné? If not, analyze your reasons for continuing to expect misfortune.

4. What is O. Henry's artistic purpose in making the entrance of the revolutionary troops into the capital so quiet and unopposed? What would be the effect of changing the order of events, so that the hole in the ceiling should be discovered first, then the "darkish stone," and last the wound in Don Rafael's head?

5. Is the total effect of the story comic or tragic? What detracts from the seriousness of the eulogy on Don Rafael? Is Captain Ma-

loné a high-minded soldier? By what means is the importance of the revolution belittled? Is the information of the Tulane professor intended to bear upon what precedes it or upon what follows? What are the chief constituents of the "local color"?

### XIII

#### THE MAN WHO WAS

1. "Local color" contributes in a very considerable measure to the effect produced by this story. We are never for a moment allowed to forget that we are in an Oriental country among mixed races. The dusky background is Indian: collect all the references to Indian places, persons, animals, habits, garb, speech, climate. In the middle distance, so to speak, is painted in brilliant colors the social life of the officers of the British army: collect the details. In the foreground appear the Russian Dirkovitch in dull green uniform and the dingy relics of the "man who was": collect the "colors" of Russia and Siberia.

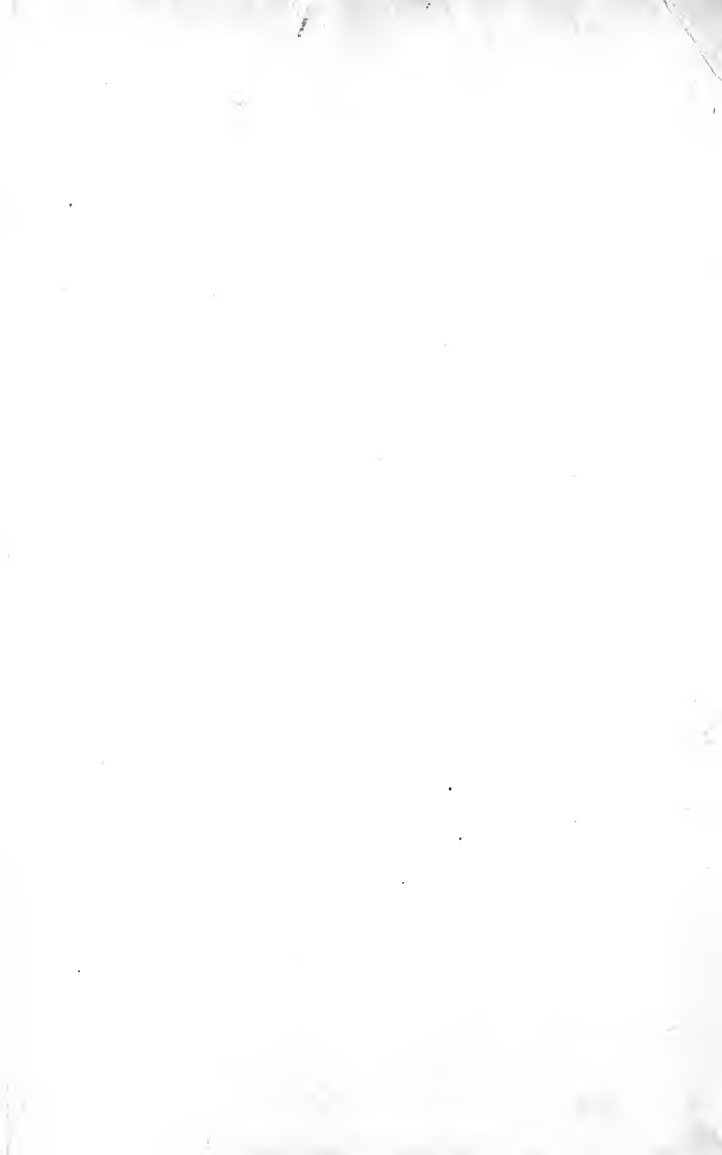
2. The effect of the story depends more directly, however, upon the author's success in conveying to his readers a lively conception of the spirit of the White Hussars: British pride, jealousy, and patriotism, coupled with an intense *esprit de corps*. Find illustrations of all of these traits. How do you explain the custom of breaking the glass after drinking the queen's health?

3. Notice the various expressions applied to Lieutenant Limmason before his identity is disclosed: "the limp heap of rags," "the bundle," "the rag-bound horror," "it," etc. By what other means does Kipling reënforce the idea that he is a crumpled and broken piece of humanity? What is the most touching moment in the course of Limmason's examination of the mess room? What is implied by the fact that Limmason explains his past in Russian and to Dirkovitch, instead of speaking in English to his fellow-officers? Does the title of the story remind you of a phrase in Virgil?

4. By what means are you made aware of the emotions of the various persons at the dinner—by the acts and ejaculations of the men themselves, or by the comment of the author? Is the crisp, hard, curt, nonchalant, slangy style suitable for relating a pathetic incident? Do you think that Kipling has here deliberately adopted the tone of mess room talk? Compare his style in other stories on various themes. Do you prefer the style of Irving? Of Stevenson?

5. Examine your own feelings after reading the story. Has your interest depended mainly upon the novelty of the scene and the incidents? Have you been introduced to unfamiliar aspects of human nature? Have you been pleased? excited? instructed? Has the story made you reflect? If so, upon what? Compare the final impression made by "The Man Who Was" with the state of your mind at the conclusion of "Ethan Brand" and "Will O' The Mill."

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